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A Flock of Girls—

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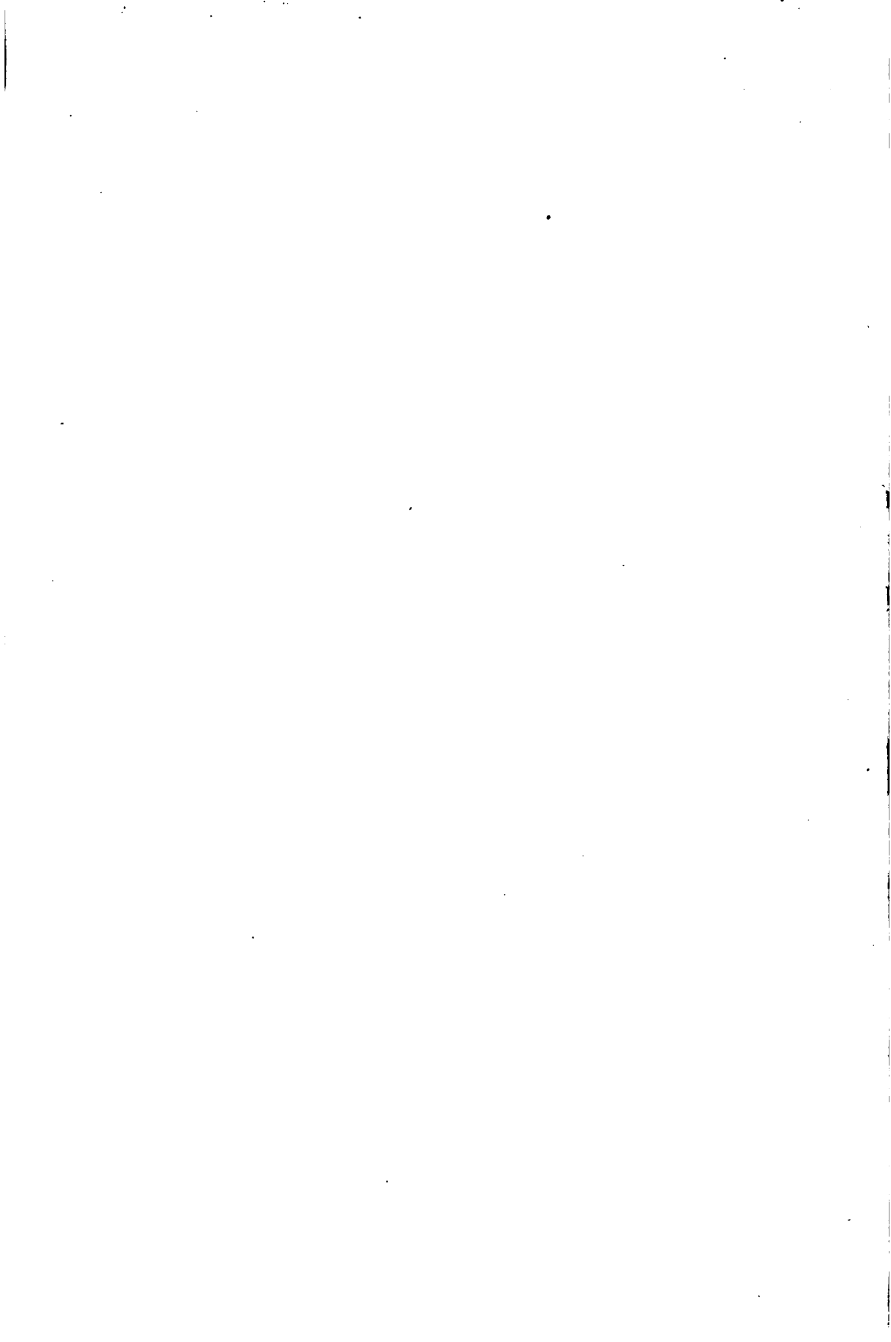
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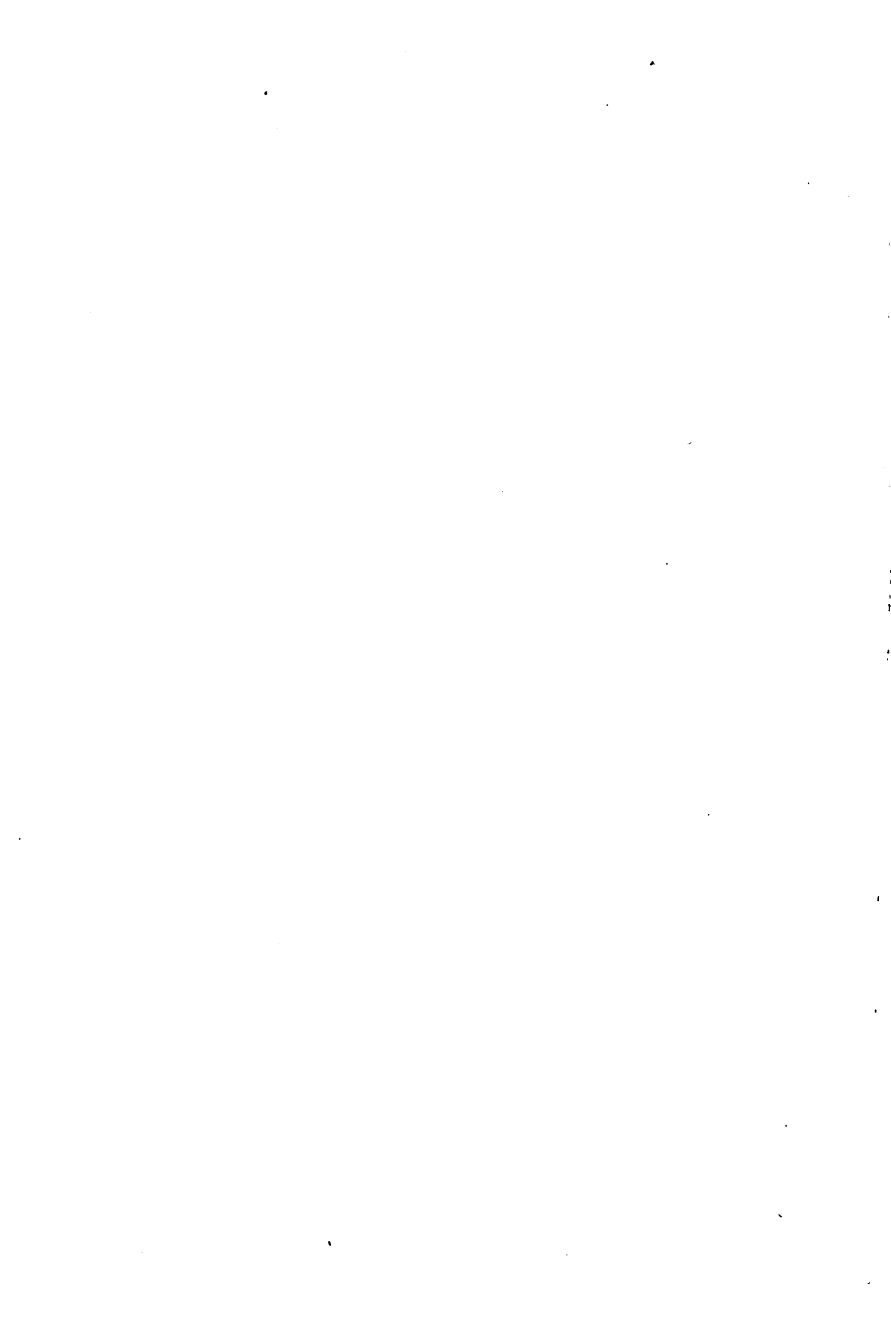
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A FLOCK OF GIRLS

AND THEIR FRIENDS

BY

NORA PERRY

AUTHOR OF "AFTER THE BALL," "NEW SONGS AND BALLADS,"
"FOR A WOMAN," ETC.



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A FLOCK OF GIRLS.

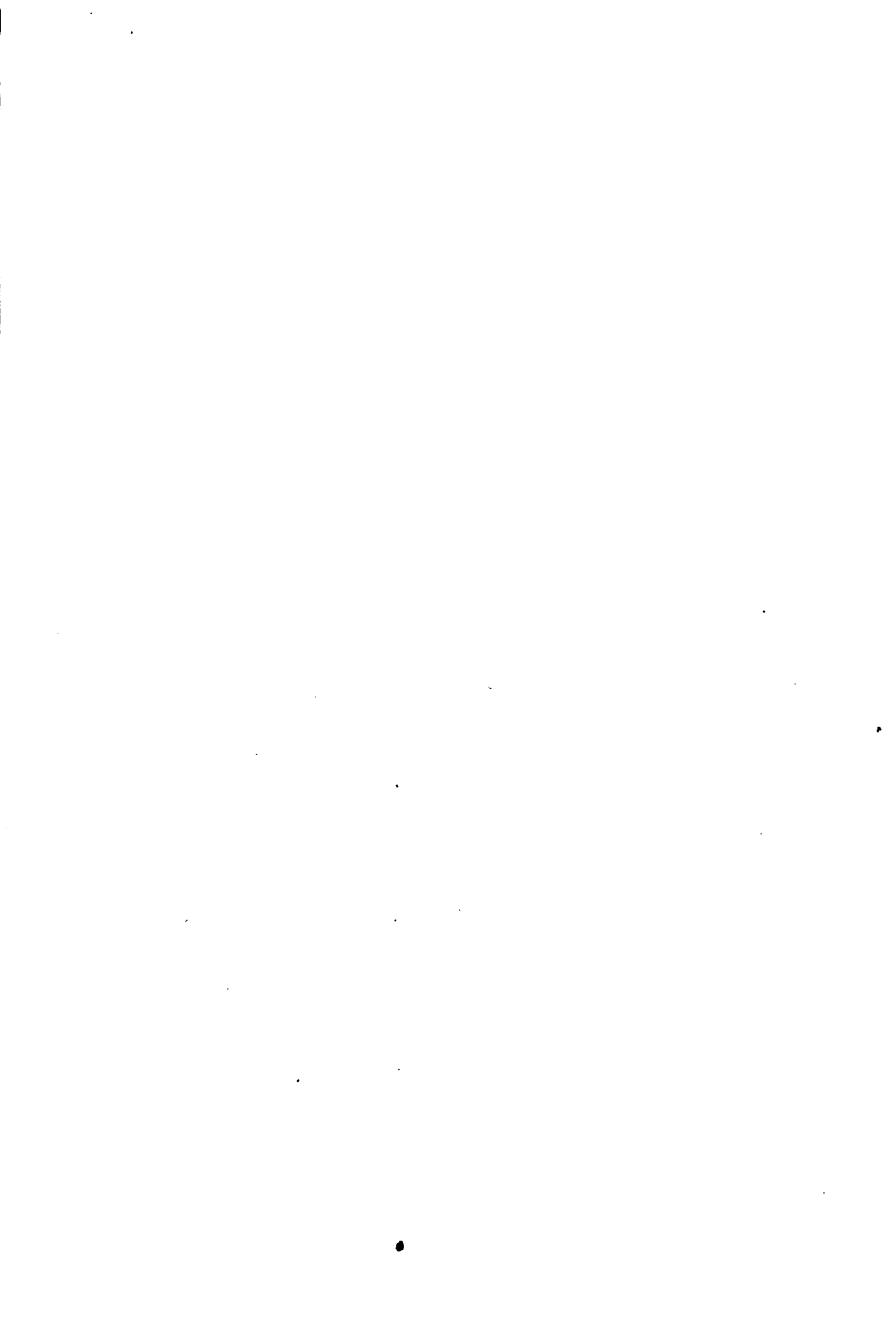
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A FLOCK OF GIRLS.

TACY.

A LITTLE yellow village-wagon was being pulled slowly over the cobble-stones near the bathing-houses at Newport by a fat and lazy black pony, urged on to its work by a young girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age.

"Come, hurry!" shouted a boy from the smooth hard sand beyond. "Give him a whack with the whip-handle."

The girl in the wagon put down her head very much as her pony was doing, but not from the same motive. Tacy Blundel was not lazy at any moment,—at this particular moment she was in any but a lazy mood,—the little down-dropping of the chin signifying, instead, a sudden uprising of temper. A very small thing for a girl to become angry about, to be sure; but Tacy was constantly losing her temper over just such small things. With a sullen look on her face, and her chin crushing the ruffle of lace at her throat, Tacy

drove her pony over the stones, with not an added jot of celerity, and without using her whip, much less the handle of it. Robert, or Bobby Blundel, as every one called him, had a mutinous expression on his jolly red face as she came up, but he didn't say anything except to give a rather short demand to "heave out the things," — the "things" in question signifying his bathing-clothes. As he received the bundle, he reached forward to help the young girl who was sitting beside Tacy to alight. But the young girl smiled and shook her head.

"What! you are not going to bathe?" he asked.

"No, not to-day," said the girl.

"Why not?" said Bobby. "You've changed your mind rather suddenly, it seems to me."

The girl smiled and blushed uneasily. She was evidently embarrassed. Bobby glanced at his sister Tacy inquiringly. Tacy knew what that glance meant, but did not respond to it; instead, her sullen expression deepened, and giving her pony a little flick with the point of the whip-lash, she drove off, leaving her brother standing on the beach-sand, where in a moment he was joined by the two other Blundel brothers, — Jimmy and Charley.

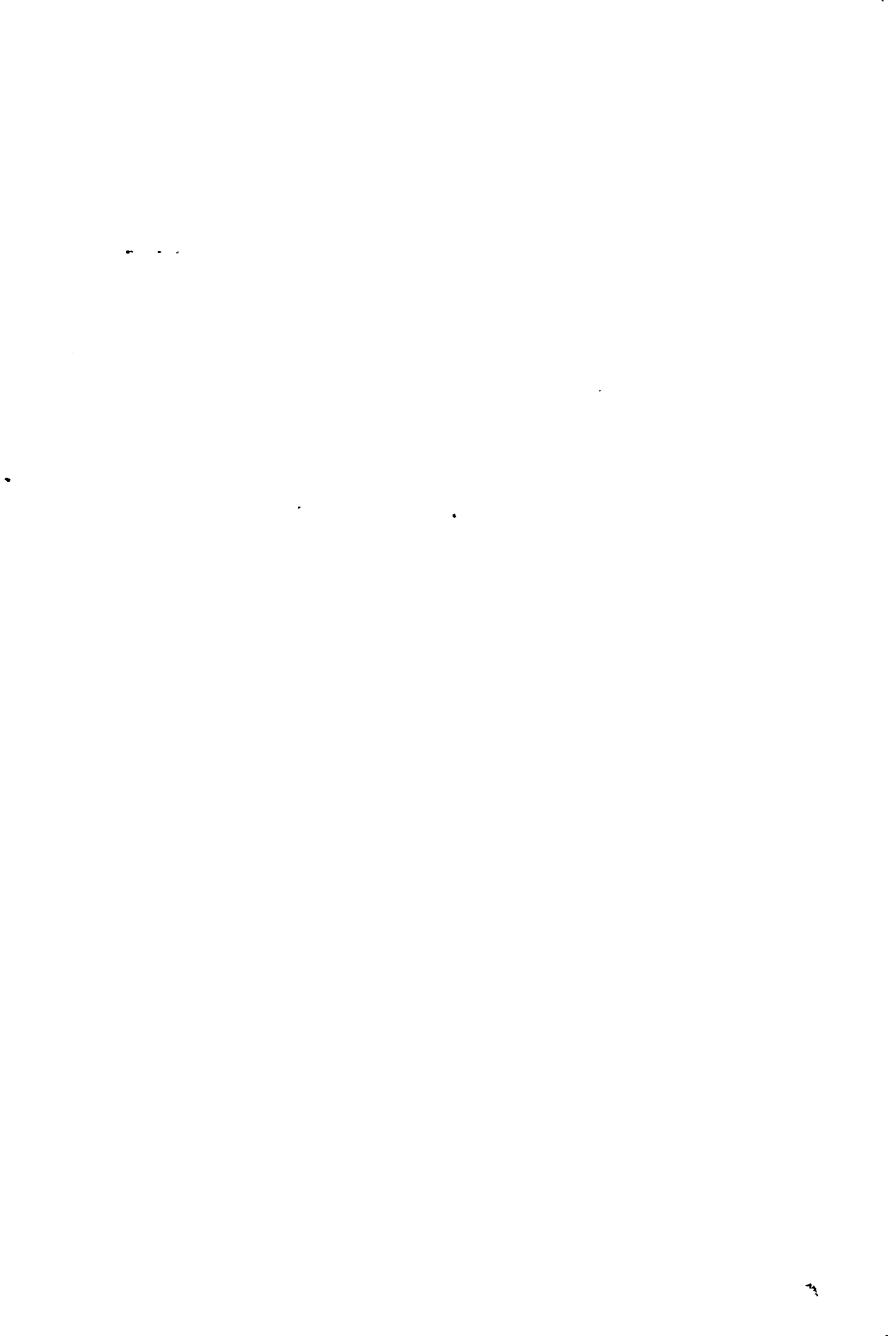
"What's up?" inquired the two in a breath.

"Oh, Judy is n't going in, this morning," grumbled Bobby.

"Why not?" inquired the two others.



"He grabbed the fat pony's head." — Page 9.



"*I don't know; ask tyrant Tacy. Tacy is n't going, so she's managed that Judy sha' n't,*" replied Bobby. "*She's wheedled her somehow.*"

"*Bother! I won't stand it. Tacy!*" and Jimmy Blundel shouted his sister's name lustily, and started to run after the yellow wagon. Bobby seized his brother's arm, and cried,—

"No, no, don't. We shall get a good scolding at home if we provoke Tacy."

But Jimmy Blundel, too indignant to care for anything but his one fixed idea, wrenched himself away and tore after the little wagon, which was moving leisurely just then. Coming up to the wagon suddenly, he grabbed the fat pony's head before Tacy knew what had happened. She had dismissed her sullen looks, and was talking very pleasantly with her girl guest.

"I say," cried Jimmy, as he caught the pony's head, "why must Judy give up bathing because *you've* given it up, Tacy? Judy's going home next week, and she came here especially on account of the bathing; her father wanted her to bathe every day."

"She can go if she wants to," answered Tacy, all the old sullen looks coming back.

"Oh, no! I don't care—I just as lief not," hurriedly answered Judy, anxious to avert the storm.

"She *does* care," retorted Jimmy, regarding only his sister as he spoke. Then swiftly turning about and putting out his hand, he pounced upon Judy's bathing-suit at the bottom of the wagon.

"There! that proves it!" he cried. "Come, Judy, we all are waiting for you."

"No, no; I really can't. I don't— Oh, go away, Jimmy!"

Her distress was so genuine that Jimmy ceased his urging, but he turned like a tiger on his sister.

"It's all your doing; you're a perfect tyrant. I *will* say so, and you may have a dozen tantrums for all I care!" And flinging the bathing-suit back into the wagon, Jimmy let go the pony's head and started off.

"Well, you'll catch it," said Bobby, to whom he presently related his exploit.

"I don't care," doggedly replied Jimmy. "Tacy is a tyrant. When everything suits her to a T, she can be as pleasant as anybody; but the minute anybody criticises or opposes her she gets her own way by falling back on that heart-disease of hers. I wish I had heart-disease! Jingo! I'd go off in a tantrum and get a bicycle quicker than a wink!"

Bobby smiled, then sobered a little, and said generously: "Tacy is n't a bit mean and selfish in other ways. She'll give you anything she has.

She gave me that jolly knife of hers with the pearl handle last week."

"Well, if she'd keep her temper, she might keep everything else," said the unpacified Jimmy.

"Tacy's been spoiled," put in Charley. "I heard Uncle Dick tell Mother so the other day, and Mother asked him what could be done when the doctor said, after she was so sick, that they must be careful and not let her get excited."

While the boys were thus discussing her, Tacy was driving along on the smooth hard sand with her friend Judy. She was trying to act as if nothing were the matter, and talk to Judy pleasantly and politely of other things; but it was difficult work, for she knew, and she knew that Judy knew, that something very much was the matter. Deep down in her heart Tacy was perfectly aware that she had done a selfish thing in keeping Judy from bathing. It had happened that none of the family nor any of her cousins, who were generally glad to drive with her, were able to go that morning, and Tacy never could bear to go alone. The boys were off early, fishing; and she had engaged to meet them at the beach with their bathing-clothes. Suddenly it occurred to her, why should n't Judy for once drive with her, and not take a bath that day? The idea, once in her mind, took firm hold. She was proud of Judy,—Miss Julia Elwood, as society

would know her some day, — for Judy was a great favorite and much sought after everywhere, and she was, moreover, a loving and sweet little body, with whom Tacy could always get on nicely. And this meant so much — so much even that Tacy herself did n't know. As her uncle Dick had said, Tacy had been spoiled by her invalidism — by knowing, as she could not help knowing from what she had heard so long, that she must always be considered and given way to for fear some excitement would injure her. That great illness of Tacy's had occurred when she was seven years old. She was a bright, promising child then, with a lovely fair complexion and golden hair. The illness had resulted from an accident. Some neighbors' children had enticed her over the lawn to play at fire-works one summer day. Her ignorant little hands had seized upon a toy cannon, and in one blinding flash there suddenly came an explosion that took away all those golden curls and ruined that lovely white and pink skin. The shock and suffering threw the child into a fever. It was thought a great mercy that her eyesight was spared, and for a long time her mother was so thankful for this that she did not give much thought to anything else. But as the days and the months and the years went by, it was found that Tacy would never again have her pretty, smooth complexion,

and that her hair would never again grow with that soft, silken abundance. Her face was not seamed with scars, but there was a roughened, thicker look to the skin, and she was uniformly pale except when, at some emotion, an unbecoming reddish flush would spread all over cheeks and brow and nose. Before Tacy entered her fifteenth year, she was fully conscious of her looks, — that is, that there was something to mark her as odd and unlike other people, to make her unalterably plain. She was sensitive to beauty in others, and sensitive to the lack of it in herself. As time went on, from day to day she grew more and more sensitive, and this made her moody and shy and often irritable. She began at last to exaggerate her defects, and to be suspicious of criticism if people gave her more than a passing observation. All this produced a condition of mind that rendered her a very exacting and difficult person to live with. With some very generous and noble qualities, which, if cultivated or allowed full and free action, would have made her welcome and beloved by every one, the wild weeds of self-indulgence were fast overcoming her, and rendering her disagreeable and unwelcome.

In short, Tacy was a tyrant, as Jimmy had said, and it all had grown out of that long-ago accident which had placed her in the position of an invalid

to whom all must defer, year after year. "Tacy must have this," and "Tacy must have that," and "Tacy must not be crossed or worried or troubled whatever happened," had been reiterated so many times that at last Tacy herself had formed the habit of expecting everything and everybody to give way to her. She meant to be good; she meant to be kind. She gave freely of her pocket-money, and bestowed her possessions generously when opportunity offered; but she never thought of giving up *herself*, her will, and her way. She criticised right and left with an unsparing tongue; but if some one happened to make a suggestion of criticism upon her, she resented it with instantaneous wrath. But she had become so used to the words "poor Tacy!" that she constantly thought that she was a little martyr to her misfortunes, and more sinned against than sinning, upon every occasion. Driving home that morning, after her encounter with her brother Jimmy, she was pricked by conscience deep down in her heart for keeping Judy from her bath; but she constantly excused herself at the same time by blaming her brothers for their selfishness.

There was extra company to luncheon that day, and the boys took an early dinner, and were away fishing until night, so that by the time Tacy met them again, which was at breakfast the next morn-

ing, something of the first freshness of the unpleasantness had worn off. Tacy, too, had been put in great good humor by the fact that she was to have her mother's special friend, lovely Mrs. Arkwright, to drive with her that morning, Judy and the boys going together in the omnibus, or drag. Tacy was a great admirer of Mrs. Arkwright, and well she might have been, for Mrs. Arkwright was full of the most gracious kindness and tact. And Mrs. Arkwright liked Tacy, though she knew Tacy through and through, as Tacy had no idea that she did. Every one in trouble found a friend in Mrs. Arkwright; and Tacy, as they drove on through the lovely Newport lanes and by-ways, began to pour out her troubles, and it was not long before her good friend had a very clear idea how affairs stood just then.

"Oh, it is such a pity!" thought Mrs. Arkwright. "No one has ever told Tacy — no one has had the courage or the tact to know how to tell her just how it is. If some one could tell her, — could open her eyes, — I'm sure it would n't do her any injury, but a great deal of good. Nothing can be so injurious as these constant quarrels and this morbid state of feeling that she has; and Tacy has really noble qualities and a loving heart!"

Thinking thus, Mrs. Arkwright looked around

tenderly, pitifully, smilingly at Tacy, who was in the midst of her grievances. Tacy saw the look, and responded with a smile of her own, and presently broke out impulsively: "Oh, Mrs. Arkwright, you are so kind and good and sympathetic, I feel sure that you would always love me, whatever I might do!"

And then Mrs. Arkwright thought: "I wonder if *I* might not tell her some day. If the right time comes, I will."

The time came sooner than she anticipated. It came on the occasion of the lawn party that Tacy gave in honor of her friend Judy. Everything had gone on very smoothly in all the preparations, and Tacy was in high spirits, with not a flaw or ripple to disturb her serenity. But just before her guests began to arrive, as she was standing with Judy and her brothers by the great window that opened on the front lawn, she reached out her hand and pulled down a beautiful big bunch of scarlet kalmia which grew near. Judy had a knot of scarlet kalmias on her shoulder; why should n't *she*?

"Oh, don't, don't!" suddenly cried out Charley, who was the little artist of the family.

"Don't what?" asked Tacy, turning her eyes to him, as she thrust a long pin through the bit of grass that held the kalmias, and thus attached them to her shoulder, just at the left of her chin.

"Why, don't put on that scarlet," explained Charley. "It looks horrid!"

"But Judy has it, and you thought it lovely on Judy a moment ago."

"Well, I think so now; but you're not Judy. Judy has dark hair and eyes, and it somehow matches Judy; but it fades you all out, and makes your skin look yellow and bricky. Here, I'll get you something for a shoulder-knot;" and the boy put out his hand to pluck some of the pale late roses that grew close to the kalmia.

In a moment Tacy had flung down the kalmias, and in the next moment had cried, —

"I don't want the roses; I won't have them!"

"But, Tacy, wait a minute," began Charley; "your hair and skin —"

"I can't help my hair and skin," sobbed Tacy.

"I was n't saying that you could," Charley hastened to say. "I did n't mean —"

"You meant to be rude; I do think my brothers are just the rudest boys in the world," she cried, turning to Judy. "They are always finding fault with me for what I can't help — always picking flaws and criticising me. I cannot help my bad skin, nor my hair — I — I wish — I could. I wish — I could look like you, Judy, and then —"

"Oh, Tacy, Tacy, don't, don't cry! Charley only meant that you were blonde and I brunette.

Oh, you must n't cry, you must n't, Tacy ; for see, somebody is coming up the drive," said Judy.

But it was too late ; the tempest of sobs already had the upper hand. Charley's words had touched the sorest and most sensitive spot in her nature, and Tacy could only fly frantically to her room to hide from her approaching guests her falling tears and struggling sobs.

Judy started to follow, but a gentle touch detained her, and a low voice whispered, —

"I'll go, Judy."

It was Mrs. Arkwright, who had come into the back drawing-room a few minutes before and heard everything. She had come to matronize the party in place of Mrs. Blundel, who was ill with neuralgia. Going slowly up the stairs, Mrs. Arkwright waited a few minutes outside Tacy's door, — waited until the tempest of sobs had subsided a little, — then softly turning the knob, she went in. Tacy thought it was Judy and did n't move.

"Tacy," called Mrs. Arkwright's sweet voice.

Tacy sprang up from the bed, where she was lying face downward.

"Oh, Mrs. Arkwright, were you there, did you hear?" she asked.

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Arkwright, calmly.

"Did you hear what Charley said about my skin?" asked Tacy.

"I heard it all, dear," said her friend.

"Oh, Mrs. Arkwright, you don't know what I suffer. It comes out everywhere,—this misfortune of mine. Strangers look at me and feel at once that I am ugly; but to think that my own brother —" And Tacy sobbed convulsively.

"Tacy, wait a moment. You think I love you, don't you?" asked Mrs. Arkwright.

"Oh, yes, yes; I hope you do, Mrs. Arkwright," Tacy answered earnestly.

"I love you very dearly, Tacy," Mrs. Arkwright went on. "I lost a little girl once who would have been just your age if she had lived, and you look like her, Tacy."

"I?" asked Tacy in surprise.

"Yes; she had blue eyes like yours, and there sometimes comes into your eyes an expression so like my Mary's that I want to take you in my arms and keep you for my very own," she continued.

Tacy forgot for the moment her own grievance in this wonderful fact that was being told her.

"I love you so much, Tacy, that I am going to talk to you, to tell you something just as I should my Mary if she were here and placed as you are."

Tacy laid her hand over her friend's without speaking.

"I not only love you, Tacy, but I admire very much certain qualities that you have."

"Oh, Mrs. Arkwright."

"You like to be loved, Tacy?"

"Better than anything, and nobody does love me but Mamma and Papa and you; I am so—so hideous. It is pretty people who are loved by everybody."

"Not by any means. They attract at first, but they don't hold merely by beauty. The most popular persons whom I know, those who are best liked, are quite plain."

"But not disfigured — not like me."

"Tacy, dear, you think too much of yourself."

"I — I?"

"Yes. The way to be liked, to be loved, is to like—to love others, and wish to make *them* happy, not yourself. Tacy, if you would try to forget yourself, your disfigurement, as you call it, which you very greatly exaggerate, and not constantly make other people uncomfortable by taking offence at every slight thing that's said,—things that are never meant,—if you would put all this aside, and give up *your* way and *your* plans, and act as,—well, just as if you *were* the prettiest person in the world,—pleased, confident, and cheerful,—you would find yourself in a short time with more friends than any mere rosy beauty; for you have so much brightness, so much—what shall I call it?—magnetism, to attract and draw people.

Why, Tacy, the other night at the concert at the Casino you were listening with all your soul in your face ; and Mrs. Bernard said to me, ‘What a fine, interesting face Miss Blundel has !’ Tacy, you never look plain — hideous, as *you* call it — except when you are angry.”

All the time that she was talking, Mrs. Arkwright had Tacy’s hand in hers and Tacy’s head held against her breast. As she ended, she pressed her closer still, and said softly, —

“My Tacy is not going to be angry with me, — with one who loves her so well that she wishes her to be thoroughly appreciated by other people, and happy, as she certainly can be.”

Tacy drew a long, deep breath, and then lifted her head. There was a new look on her face — a look of wonder and timidity combined. As she met Mrs. Arkwright’s eyes, she blushed, then said, with a noble candor that proved the existence of the generous qualities Mrs. Arkwright had discerned : “Nobody ever found fault with me like this before ; nobody ever found fault with me at all except the boys, and that was generally when they were angry. Oh, I have been like a silly baby ! And now — you must be right, for you love me — and — I will try ; I will try.”

Mrs. Arkwright bent down and kissed her. “I knew that you could bear the truth, dear Tacy, and

that is a great quality ; few people can bear the truth when it is unflattering. Now come, let us go down."

Neither the boys nor Judy knew just when Tacy returned, for they were busy talking to the guests who had arrived ; but they were one and all not a little surprised when they suddenly saw Tacy pleasantly chatting to a group of girls, with not a trace of her recent tempest of tears. Throughout the rest of the day it was the same, — Tacy was trying to conquer herself. It was no easy task. Now and then some one's will conflicted with hers. Once it was Jimmy's, who had arranged a game of tennis when *she* had planned to go rowing from the pier at the foot of the garden, for the Blundels' house was near the bay. At first she began to speak in her old imperious fashion, then she recalled "Make *them* happy, not yourself ; give up *your* way." She had promised to try ; and in a moment she had gained a firm hold of herself, as it were, and was saying, —

"Oh, if you had planned a tennis-game, it's all right. We will go rowing by and by, if you like."

Jimmy dropped his tennis-racket and stared up in amazement at his sister. His action — his look — more than anything, conveyed to her some idea of what a tyrant she had been — of the fear in which they held her. So it went on ; if she

accepted any plan, or fell in with any opinion without resistance and objection, the boys and even Judy showed such visible amazement that it was embarrassing. It was not easy to meet all this, but it nevertheless opened her eyes.

That night, after all the guests were gone, Tacy went down to their own private pier at the foot of the garden to think things over. Sitting there in the shadow, quite unseen, she watched the boats in the harbor, and wondered if she had not on the whole been happier for her new efforts. Soon familiar voices struck upon her ear, and she saw a boat drifting toward their landing. The voices were those of Bobby and Jimmy. She was just about to speak to them as they rowed toward the stairway, when she heard Jimmy say, —

“If Tacy would be like that always, she’d be the nicest girl I know. I like her better than Judy when she’s in good humor, because she has so much ‘go’ in her.”

Tacy held her breath with amazement. Better than Judy — pretty Judy!

“But was n’t she angry though with Charley?” he went on. “And Charley never meant what she thought he did. She’s got it in her head she’s a fright, and she’s always thinking about it, and thinking other people are thinking about it. Almost conceited that is, I should say.”

"Tacy looks well enough when she's pleasant. She looked very pretty to-day," put in Bobby.

"Yes, Tacy is lovely when she's in good humor. But when she's angry,—oh, my!" and Jimmy stopped short, with an emphasis that spoke more than words.

Perhaps it needed just this comment to put the final proof before Tacy, and to show her that she was on the right track at last. Not all at once did she succeed in keeping on this right track; there were moments and hours when she faltered and slipped, but little by little her better judgment and her sense of justice got the upper hand, and little by little the boys forgot to be on the defensive, forgot the bitter title of "Tyrant Tacy," and her old ways, in her new ways.

A few months ago there was another lawn party at the Blundels'. It was a much gayer and larger party than the one I have just spoken of, for Tacy was now eighteen. Tall, slender, and graceful, she stood, the centre of an animated group, as Mrs. Arkwright came down the wide path toward her. Mrs. Arkwright had just returned from Europe, where she had been for a year, and she saw a great change in Tacy.

What was it? She had not grown to be a beauty by any means; she had the same pallid, uncertain-colored skin, but there was a different

aspect about her altogether,—a look of life and health and brightness. Mrs. Blundel joined Mrs. Arkwright as she paced slowly along.

“You are thinking how well Tacy is looking, Mrs. Arkwright, I know. She began to mend two years ago. You remember how irritable the poor child used to be? I always said that it was her state of health, and you see I was right. She is very different now.”

Tacy at this moment caught Mrs. Arkwright's glance. The next moment she had Mrs. Arkwright's hands in hers, and a moment later she had turned from the animated group about her and was walking down the lawn with her friend.

“How well you look, Tacy!”

Tacy laughed. “That was what Mamma was saying to you, Mrs. Arkwright; I knew by her glance. Dear Mamma! I feel like a fraud, Mrs. Arkwright.”

“What do you mean?”

“Why, Mamma thinks my better behavior is all the result of a sudden improvement in my health, when”—and Tacy laughed again, half sadly—“it is my better behavior that has improved my health. Oh, when I think of the hot rages I used to have over trifles! You opened my eyes, Mrs. Arkwright, and when I began to see myself as I really was, I hated myself; and when

I began to mend those hot rages, my health mended."

"I haven't a doubt of it, Tacy; and you look so bright and happy now!"

The two walked down the garden together, and presently came upon Jimmy, now a tall lad of fifteen. He was at the awkward, "hobble-de-hoy" age, and shrank from parties. He was trying to escape from this one at that very moment, and Tacy knew it. But she said nothing about it; she only slipped her hand over his arm, and asked him about the new tennis-rackets.

"Jimmy has a genius for making improvements," she explained, "and he has made a great improvement on the ordinary racket."

Jimmy then felt called upon to explain also, and the next minute they had come upon the tennis-ground, and almost before Jimmy knew it he was sending the balls flying, and very soon after he was playing a vigorous game with some young people, forgetting his hobble-de-hoy-hood and his dislike of parties. But as Tacy walked away he looked over his shoulder and called to her,—

"Can't you stay, Tacy, and take a hand?"

"Not now, but I will by and by, Jimmy," she said pleasantly. Mrs. Arkwright noticed that it was like this with every one; Tacy was wanted to take a hand in everything that was going on.

When, at the end of the day, a very young, shy girl said to Mrs. Arkwright, "Tacy makes people so comfortable!" she had touched the secret spring of Tacy's popularity.

She made people comfortable, because she had learned a gracious tact through forgetting herself.

JIM.

TO begin with, Jim was a girl. Her rightful name was Jemima,—“a dreadful name, a horrid name,” said all the pretty Carisbrook aunts in remonstrance when their brother, who was Jemima’s father also, proposed bestowing this singular old-fashioned appellation upon the rosy blue-eyed baby in his arms.

“Such a pretty baby for such a horrid name, John; I don’t see how you can have the heart to do it!” they cried in chorus.

“It’s the name of the woman who made me what I am,—dear old aunt Jemima! You’re too young, girls, to know what a splendid woman she was. It is n’t only that I owe everything to her, but she was the best companion in the world, and she was the finest lady, with one exception, that I ever saw. Her name sounds beautiful to me, and I hope this little girl will grow up to wear it as an honor.”

“If he would only call it Louise Jemima, or Jemima Louise, we could drop the Jemima and everything would be lovely.” But they did n’t like

to suggest this, and so perhaps that was the reason why John Carisbrook, who was a man of few words, did n't tell them what his wife had said before she died: "Don't call the baby for me, John dear; let me have my name all to myself in your thoughts. Call the darling anything else you like, but not Louise."

So the baby was christened Jemima, nothing but Jemima; and she grew up out of her babyhood and early childhood as sweet-faced and nice-mannered a little girl as you would wish to see. Sweet faces and nice manners were, however, the rule and not the exception in the Carisbrook family,—an inheritance as it were. Underneath the sweet faces and the nice manners there were sometimes very grave faults. Perhaps not the least of these was self-will. Little Jemima had inherited this fault "with a vengeance," the Carisbrook aunts used to say. From the time she could trot, she used to make up her mind to do or not to do some special thing, and all the king's horses and all the king's men could n't move her. So when she made up her mind at three years old that she would n't answer to any other name than "Jim," she stuck to it with such a sturdy determination that gradually one by one the whole family yielded; and by the time she was five years old nobody thought of calling her anything else.

This did very well indeed, was rather piquant and funny, for a few years, as the child was a small slender creature for a long time, and with her short crisply-cut hair, her simple unfurbelowed shirt-waist frocks, a boy's name seemed as fitting for her as a girl's. All at once she began to grow. She shot up almost like Jack's beanstalk, and suddenly bloomed out a tall girl of fifteen. The sweet face was sweeter still—the Carisbrooks were all handsome people—and the nice manners were nicer than ever. Tall and pretty and womanly, she was coming home from school one day, when a schoolmate hurrying after her called out,—

“Jim, Jim, wait for me!”

Tall and pretty and womanly, she turned about and met the astonished gaze of three boys. They were Latin School boys, near her own age, nice gentlemanly fellows, every one, but they all three laughed as they stared at her. The color flushed into her face. “How horrid of them!” she thought, bringing her brows down into a frown.

That very night one of the Carisbrook aunts called. “My dear,” she began, before she had seated herself, “you are getting too big to be called ‘Jim’ any longer. I overheard some young men talking about the absurdity of your name as I came down in the horse-cars. They had just met you, and somebody had called ‘Jim!’ after you.”

"Three young *men!* three *boys!* three horrid *boys!* What business is it of theirs?"

"They said, or one of them, the biggest one, said what business had *you* with such a name; and I think he was right."

"I've just as good a right to it as *they* have to *their* names," said our indignant Jemima.

"They said you must be a loud, bold sort of girl to take up such a name. They could n't know, you see, just how it was, and it was n't strange it looked that way to them."

The tears welled up into poor Jim's eyes, but she would n't let them run over.

"They're just horrid! horrid!" she cried, "and I despise them. They think the world is made for them, because they are boys. Girls can't do anything or *have* anything. Boys have everything."

Mr. Carisbrook, who had come in just here, wanted to know what all this excitement meant, and his sisters told him, while Jim, who was by this time too full of wrath and tears to speak, fled from the room.

The poor man sighed as he listened. "Well, Kate," he said to his sister when she had finished, "you've gone to work the wrong way. The child is only excited by opposition like this, and I fear she'll stick to 'Jim' more persistently than ever."

"She's too old for this sort of thing, John. She ought to be reasonable enough now, or sensible enough, to know that she ought to yield; and you, I should think, would insist upon her doing so."

"She does n't like her name any better than you do, Kate," answered Mr. Carisbrook, "and she tried to better it, I suppose, when she was a little thing, and now it is hard for her to give it up." This was a great deal for Mr. Carisbrook to say, for it was acknowledging, in a way, that he had made a mistake, and the Carisbrooks were not very ready to do that at any time. Miss Carisbrook, after this, held her peace. As she told her sisters, her tongue was tied, what with John's concession and her niece's obstinacy.

So the time went on, the tall womanly-looking girl getting taller still, her sweet face sweeter and prettier than ever,—so conspicuously pretty that people used constantly to ask, "Who *is* that tall, golden-haired, brown-eyed girl that goes down Commonwealth Avenue every morning at half-past eight?" As they always asked this question of some other girl in that vicinity, the answer was invariably, not, "It is Mr. Carisbrook's daughter," but, "Oh, that is Jim Carisbrook!" Then would follow all sorts of exclamations and questions, the conclusive answer always being: "She was christened some girl's name that she did n't like, and so

she took the name of 'Jim.'” They never got the whole story, these girls, they only had a bit here and there just as older people will get things; and as older people all over the world are continually doing, they told the little they knew, putting it into form with a word or two that turned the matter into quite another affair. So it was that little by little people began to think of that tall, pretty girl with the golden hair and the brown eyes as a queer, bold, headstrong sort of girl who had given herself a boy's name.

The schoolgirls liked Jim, for she was pleasant and generous; but they very soon found out that it would n't do for them to make any jest upon her self-assumed name of “Jim,” if they wished for peace. Yet, liking her as well as they did, they could n't help being somewhat affected by the older people's remark and criticism. In fact, they felt a little ashamed of “Jim.”

It was just at this crisis that the great Christmas party at Miss Millwood's school came off. It was a very grand affair, all sorts of fine and funny things being in the arrangements. But the finest and the funniest of all was the stocking-hanging.

Every girl was to make a big stocking out of strong cloth and ornament it with gay bows or any other devices appropriate and pretty, embroidering her name upon it in large letters. Miss Marchant,

the teacher in charge, had given orders that every stocking should be completed a week before Christmas, so that the preparations might not be delayed. These preparations were very elaborate, a big sham chimney-piece having been built up in the large hall that was used generally for a gymnasium. The stockings were to be hung all up and down upon this chimney-piece, the chimney-piece itself representing in bright pictures various Christmas scenes in various countries. When this ingenious piece of mechanism was completed it looked so real, so solid, that it seemed as if it had always been there; and when the stockings were hung here and there upon little hooks, the girls screamed with delight. Red stockings, blue stockings, pink stockings, all the colors of the rainbow, embroidered in contrasting colors. The oddest of all was a black stocking worked with gold and red at top and toe; and all by itself in the great black space between was one small name—"Jim"—done in red silk. There was a general hush and then a general giggle among the girls when this was spied; but no one made any remark, any remonstrance, to "Jim" herself. They had long ago discovered that she was not easily approached upon this subject; but when by themselves they whispered together both question and comment.

Well, Christmas eve came, and with it the long-planned party. Not only had the parents of the children been invited, but quite an army of brothers and older sisters. There were young ladies just "out," in society parlance, and young men just "in" at Harvard, with a sprinkling of Chauncy Hall and Latin School boys, until the assemblage looked like a grand class-day at old Cambridge, with the fluttering of white dresses and the display of white neckties and buttonhole bouquets. But Cambridge never saw anything so pretty as that big hall hung with festoons and flowers, with the great decorated chimney-piece at one end, and the long procession of girls as they marched round and round in the midst of the festoons and flowery garlands. Round and round they marched to the strains of a harp and violin, and presently, on the third turn, each girl stepped out of the procession and took her place on the big hearthstone before the big chimney. There she awaited the distribution from the hands of the principal, not only of the Christmas stockings, but of the little gayly ornamented report of her own special wisdom or unwisdom for the just closed term.

It is needless to say, however, that at this moment it was the Christmas stockings that attracted the most attention and interest. One by one Miss Millwood detached the great gay things from their

hooks, and calling out the names of the owners, handed them forth with some light and bright word to fit the occasion. It somehow happened that though the big black and gold and red stocking was in a conspicuous place, it was left until the last, just at the very last, when everybody had got upon the *qui vive* by the delay, to see to whom it was going. Slowly, at last, Miss Millwood took it down. For a moment, a single moment, she hesitated over it. Every girl in the hall knew why she was hesitating, and not only every girl, but a good many of the grown-up people. One by one she had called out the various pretty and nice names of the others, the Graces and Marys and Amys, but all at once confronted by that pert, that rowdy little "Jim," the sense of contrast, of fitness, came appallingly over her in that throng of fine people. Oh, that naughty, naughty Jemima! Had she not told her that she must embroider her proper name instead of that outrageous, unsuitable "Jim"? Had she not told Miss Marchant to see to it that she did, and between them both — Miss Marchant with her forgetfulness and her near-sightedness, and Jemima with her wilfulness — there was this ridiculous, unseemly blunder. All these thoughts went flying through Miss Millwood's mind in that minute that she hesitated. In the next moment she had passed the stocking on to Jemima, and

with one grave, reproachful look, had called in a clear voice — “Miss Jemima Carisbrook!”

The red color flushed all over Jemima’s face in that instant, and in the next instant it faded away, leaving its trace in two scarlet spots upon either cheek. Tears, too, had sprung to her eyes; but she had forced them back, and the effect of all this was to heighten her beauty, to make her look like a lovely pink and white flower, in her white dress and rose-colored ribbons.

“Who is she? Who is she?” ran round from mouth to mouth among the older sisters and the tall brothers. And the answer to this was, “Why, did n’t you see? It’s the girl who calls herself ‘Jim’!”

“Such a nice-looking girl to do such a bold, fast thing!” said one of the matrons who had before inquired concerning her.

“And she had embroidered just that one name ‘Jim,’ on her stocking; how horrid of her!” said another.

“Jim is n’t horrid, though,” spoke up little Patty Lawton. “She is very nice, Jim is. We all like Jim.”

“She’s out and out the beauty of the lot,” said Dick Lawton at this, “and you must introduce me, Patty. She may call herself Nebuchadnezzar, if she wants to, with that face.”

Tom Armitage nodded a laughing assent to this. "I join you there, Dick. Come, Miss Patty, take us round to her as soon as you can. I want to know Jim too. I'm sure she's a good fellow."

The two matrons and the elder sisters, who heard this, looked shocked and disgusted.

"I'm sure, Patty," said Ellen Lawton, "that girl can't be a nice, lady-like girl to call herself a boy's name, so that young men can speak of her in the way that Tom and Dick do."

Patty stood up valiantly for poor "Jim," but it was of no use. Patty was "a little girl," and "didn't understand." So the tide rose, and set against poor wilful, mistaken Jim, who had no real harm in her, who was, indeed, as refined and sensitive as the best of them.

By and by, when the contents of the stockings had all been looked over, and Jim was standing a little at one side by herself, turning over and over upon her wrist one of those jingling bangles that girls love—her aunt Kate's present to her—she heard Patty Lawton's voice at her elbow,—

"Jim, I want to introduce my brother Dick and Mr. Armitage to you."

Lifting her head she met the smiling gaze of the two young men.

"This is my brother Dick, and this is Tom Armitage," blundered Patty, who did n't know much

about introductions. The young men bowed and laughed.

"I suppose Patty does n't mean us to be very ceremonious, as she has only given us your Christian name," remarked Dick Lawton with a smile.

"I'm sure nothing could be nicer than 'Jim,'" spoke up Tom Armitage airily. "One gets so tired of the Graces and Mauds and Evas. I think it very jolly of you," looking admiringly at Jemima's flushed face, "to take one of our names — to — to become one of *us* as it were; and I'm sure I shall be very glad to welcome you as a comrade, and to —"

"To call her Jim?" interrupted Patty, beginning to think she had done something amiss in her introduction.

"Yes, yes," assented Dick Lawton, "to call her 'Jim,' of course, if she will let me, and will return the compliment of dropping my Mr."

The beautiful bright color had all left Jemima's face by the time this word was spoken. Suddenly, in the last minute, there had broken upon her the meaning of a great many things. The meaning of what it was to be a young girl and not a child to others; of what was expected of her; and of how things might be misunderstood to her disadvantage. She had wilfully set herself in opposition to her aunts, to her father's remonstrance; she

had thought she knew better than anybody what she could and what she *would* do; she had taken her way, and this — this was the result: that these — these boys — oh! they were nothing but boys, though they were Harvard students — had thought that she was a silly, forward girl, whom they could chaff and ridicule and make game of, — a girl who had not the sense to resent such ridicule or to see that it *was* ridicule. One after another these thoughts chased each other in headlong fashion through her mind; in such headlong fashion that at the last, when Tom Armitage had finished his speech about calling her “Jim,” in a little fire-spirt and fury of feeling, without a breath of waiting, she lifted her eyes straight to his, and said in a clear, almost a savage tone, —

“I am Miss Carisbrook, if you please!”

Tom started. Dick Lawton forgot the gay speech he had on his lips, and involuntarily stepped back, and made a sort of obeisance to this tall, indignant young girl whose eyes, for a moment, seemed to smite them like a flaming sword. Tom, the next instant, began a little flippant apology, half jesting, half serious; a mocking little speech, that showed he did not yet comprehend. It stung Jemima anew.

“How dare you talk to me like this!” she flung out impetuously. “How dare you!” Then a little

sob broke into her voice, but she rushed on in spite of it, and in a minute more she had somehow revealed to her listeners the whole story of her wilfulness, all her mistake and theirs, all her childish foolishness and wrong-headedness, which was never wrong-heartedness. The little group was so separated from the others, and the others were so busy over their own affairs, that there was no general observation of this little scene. Only two or three people outside of the immediate parties concerned heard anything of it, and of these, one was the matron who had been so strongly prejudiced against Jemima ; and she, as Jemima's passionate words came to an end, all at once took a swift step towards the girl, and holding out her hand spoke with a soft, odd quaver in her voice, —

“ My dear, we all of us make foolish mistakes sometimes and misunderstand each other, and the best thing we can do is to forgive and forget, don't you think so ? ” Then without waiting for Jemima to reply, she bent down and kissed her.

Jemima never could quite understand how everything suddenly seemed to change ; how instead of a cold criticism she felt a sense of friendliness and kindness ; how even Tom Armitage no longer appeared so dreadful, so detestable, but the foolish, blundering boy he was, as he came forward and hoped she would forgive him.

"I told you Jim was nice," said little Patty, who saw all this without entirely comprehending the whys and the wherefores of the situation. Dick Lawton and Tom Armitage smiled, but Tom rather quickly remarked, —

"I believe you, Patty; but had n't we all better call her Miss Carisbrook?"

Throughout the rest of the evening it was Miss Carisbrook here and Miss Carisbrook there; the two Harvard boys had taken the hint with a will. But at the very last the kind matron who had been so good to her spoke again to her smilingly, —

"Good-night, Jemima!" and Jemima blushed and brightened all in a breath. She did n't know that "Jemima" could sound so sweetly.

When next term came round it was noticed that there was no longer any "Jim" Carisbrook; Jemima Carisbrook had taken the place, and when it was n't "Jemima" it was "Miss Carisbrook."

Jemima's father was delighted and the Carisbrook aunts were astonished. They knew nothing of the Christmas episode that had taught the child so much.

"She is growing up very like her aunt Jemima," said her father one day. Then, laughingly, "Shakespeare says 'What's in a name,' and 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet;' but I don't think our little girl would have been half so sweet,

or half the girl she is, if it had n't been for her name." Jemima laughed also, and blushed a little at her own thought.

"Perhaps it's true: perhaps I would n't have been the girl I am if it had n't been for my name, and the fight I have had with myself and the things I have found out for myself through it."

Two years from that time Jemima graduated. Everybody who can, goes to the graduating exercises at Miss Millwood's school, and the hall was full. "Such a sweet-looking, nice-mannered girl!" people said as Jemima came forward. But after the exercises were over, a flock of her father's friends came up to congratulate her, and every one of them said, "You're so like your aunt Jemima, my dear. You don't remember her, of course; she died before you were born, but she was one of the sweetest women in the world." Jemima, turning just here, saw her father's face shining with happiness. How could she ever have been so bitter and disagreeable about the name he loved, she thought; and presently when one and another came up and called her Jemima, she began to wonder how she herself could ever have thought the name ugly.

It was only the other day that Jemima was eighteen, and down on the Back Bay there was a big birthday party at her father's house. All her

old school friends and a great many other friends were there. Among these was somebody's friend from New York.

"Such an ugly name — 'Jemima' — for such a charming girl!" he commented, after he had seen his young hostess.

"No — really, do you think so?" responded Grace Armitage, with a little tone of surprise. "Why, it does n't strike me so. You see we have such an admiration for Jemima herself that we like everything about her; but I recollect we used to think it rather a queer old name. But now — well, Jemima is so sweet she has made even her name sweet."

KATE OXFORD.

IF ever Kate Oxford had a pleasant time in her uncle's house, it was when artists dined there and talked after dinner upon art and artists generally.

She had never enjoyed herself quite so much as she did on the occasion when Mr. Frear dropped in informally one day just after he arrived in Newport that summer that he had begun to make himself famous by his decorations of church and house interiors. It was a beautiful day in late June, and the Oxford villa, just off Bellevue Avenue, was a charming place for an artist to hold forth in, commanding, as it did from the piazza, a sweeping view of the ocean on one side and all sorts of Norman and Queen Anne structures with acres of green lawn on the other. When the party left the dining-room that day and went out on this piazza, Kate took care to get quite near Mr. Frear that she might not lose any of his talk. Her cousin Tony came and seated himself astride of the piazza railing, just at her back, biding his time to entice Kate away for a tennis game before it got too late.

Tony was twelve and Kate was over seventeen, but they were close friends and companions. Tony declared that Kate was one of the best fellows he ever saw, and Kate showed her appreciation of this compliment by generally preferring the society of her young cousin to that of any of the elder ones.

There seemed to be no end of Oxfords, big and little. Kate was the only stray sheep of the family, her father, Mr. Tom Oxford, dying when she was a baby, and her mother following six years after. It was then that she was taken into her uncle John's family; and aunt Sophy always thought she was cared for exactly like one of her own children. But it was very certain that none of her own children were made so useful as Kate,—perhaps they had n't the knack of being useful. Everybody had always said that Kate was such a handy little thing,—“handy and sweet-tempered.” Such people are always called upon to serve others, and they generally give their service willingly. Kate did; but she sometimes used to think, as she grew older, that the little parlor-maid had more time than she for her own special tastes and pleasures. It was, “Kate, won't you do this?” and “Kate, won't you come here?” and “Kate, won't you go there?” just as to-night when she wanted to listen to Mr. Frear for her own pleasure it was Tony who was whispering at her back,—

"Come, Kate, give these old duffers the slip and come out and have a tennis game with me."

But Kate once in a while had her own way. She had it now, and turned a deaf ear to Tony's teasing while Mr. Frear talked. He had been answering various questions by interesting descriptive explanations, when some one — another guest — suddenly asked rather tactlessly, —

"Have you given up your — other painting?"

The artist flushed a little, then laughed and answered, —

"I hope not. But the community seemed to appreciate my decorative art better than my portraits. By and by I hope to be able to please myself, and" — laughing again — "paint perhaps inferior portraits instead of superior friezes and dadoes and panels."

"Well, for my part," said the tactless gentleman who had just spoken, "I'd rather have a first-rate photograph, so far as likeness goes, than a portrait painted by the best artist that ever lived."

A perfect hubbub of horrified "ohs" and "ahs" and other and stronger protests arose. When the Babel subsided, the artist astonished everybody by saying, —

"I understand perfectly what you mean; a fine photograph is a great thing, — it's nature and art together; but the painted portrait is, when done by

a thorough artist, a more *human* work ; the photograph can only catch one fleeting expression. If the artist understands his subject thoroughly, is in sympathy with the subject, he can bring out a dozen expressions almost — as he is capable of handling his work — in one portrait. All the great portraits show that. William Hunt's best work always did."

There was a general assent to this, and presently, in the course of the talk, the artist generously spoke up again for the art of photography. It was an immense discovery, but the difficulty was in finding skilful and artistic workers in it. "Because it is so largely mechanical," he finished, "everybody thinks he can dabble in it and make a livelihood by it."

Tony, at the word "photographs," pricked up his ears. As Mr. Frear ceased speaking, the boy wriggled down from the piazza railing and came round to the front.

"I say," he began, "Kate can take splendid photographs. She's taken me and Essie and Frank and the Macdonald children, and Beppo and Fritz the dogs. I'll show 'em to you."

"Tony!" cried Kate. But Tony was upstairs and out of hearing, and before she knew how to excuse herself to go in search of him he was back again displaying her work to Mr. Frear.

"You mustn't bore Mr. Frear like that," broke out Kate, scarlet and shy, and glancing apprehensively at her aunt.

But Mr. Frear was turning over the pictures.

"Did *you* do these, Miss Kate?" he presently asked. Kate shyly assured him that she did.

He continued turning over the collection, twenty or more in all, including the Macdonalds and their dogs.

Mrs. Oxford lifted her eyebrows at Kate, and shook her head with a little smile that said as plainly as words could, "You see how odd and unladylike other people beside myself consider this amusement for a girl." "Kate is never fit to go to a party with her fingers all stained up with these horrid chemicals," she had said only yesterday to her friend Mrs. Ellerton.

At that very moment there were three little brown spots on Kate's white forefinger. Mrs. Oxford saw them and sighed. It was just at that instant that Mr. Frear took up the last of the photographs; it was the likeness of Jimmy Macdonald and his sister upon one card.

"Who taught you to do your work so well, Miss Kate?" he inquired. Kate stared as if she doubted her ears.

"I—no one taught me; but when I was in Boston last winter, visiting my cousins, I used to go

with my cousin Jack to Mr. Bond's studio a good deal. Jack was learning photography. He was going out to South America and he wanted to perfect himself in photography, for use and for amusement too. I used to help Jack."

"Well, you had a very good teacher if you had Bond. Bond is a genius in his way."

"Then I read Wilson's book on photography, and some French books Jack got."

"And Jack gave her a camera and a whole kit just like his before he went off," put in Tony.

"You've done very well, Miss Kate, very. You've got Bond's method and something else that must be your own. Who taught you, now, to place a subject in that half light?" And Mr. Frear held up the picture of Jimmy Macdonald. Kate forgot her shyness, forgot her aunt's disapproval of her unlady-like employment, forgot the brown spots on her finger, in Mr. Frear's interest; and coming forward she began to explain her processes with unaffected enthusiasm. At the end of her explanations Mr. Frear remarked laughingly, —

"It's a great pity you are not a young man with your living to earn. If you were, you would soon be on the high-road to fortune, with this ability to study a subject, and to place it in the best light, and then to use chemicals and paper in a way to produce such artistic results."

Mrs. Oxford now came up with an anxiety that was almost comical, and begged Mr. Frear not to encourage Kate in "that dirty work." "It might do for a boy, but for a girl — why, just look at her hands — look at those spots. And that is nothing, — nothing to what I have seen!"

"Oh, well, she would get over that. There used to be a Frenchwoman in Paris who took the most remarkable photographs. She directed every detail with every individual picture, but she never put her hand to anything personally, except to place a sitter. I remember she had very beautiful hands, and she was the best-dressed woman in Paris. When Miss Kate goes into the business regularly she will no doubt have her assistants, and be as fine as Madame Véron."

"Goes into the business regularly! Why, I should think it was bad enough to have a young *man* of social position choose that employment, — an employment any uneducated person can choose — that they *do* choose constantly!"

Mrs. Oxford could never take a joke. But her words made Mr. Frear drop his joke, and take up again for the skilled photographer, — that skill and taste that amounts almost to genius, and which requires brains and study to carry out. He instanced Mrs. Cameron of London with her wonderful Rembrandt photographs.

As he was speaking, a long musical note, strong and jubilant, rang over the lawn to them; and the next moment came in view a four-in-hand driven by Frank Oxford, the eldest son of the Oxfords, and from the top, gayly-attired, looked down a tribe of Oxford cousins and their friends. The photograph talk stopped as this load of fashionable young people drew up at the door. Mrs. Oxford went forward beaming with pride, and a merry conversation went on between the party on the piazza and the party on the coach.

But Kate sat dumb, with a new look in her face. She was *in* and not *of* this great gay money-spending world. All the Oxfords and their friends were full of accomplishments; they could sing, play on all sorts of instruments, dance and talk with grace and ease "upon any subject," as Mrs. Oxford admiringly said. Kate could do none of these things. Quiet, and shy to express her thoughts, she had never much to say beside these glib-voiced relatives, though she read some of the best books with growing appreciation. All the relatives meant to be kind to Kate, but she was always a little left out, for she did not apparently care for the things that they did. "She was such a domestic little thing," was their explanatory remark about her as they saw her fall into the ways of usefulness in aunt Sophy's household. "Kate's mother was

an Oxford cousin, but Kate is n't a bit like her," aunt Sophy declared. The Oxfords all had great taste in dress, but Kate never knew how to wear her clothes, she would often say, and the others would carelessly agree. Perhaps none of them for one moment thought that things might have been different if Kate had had the liberty and range of a fortune, as her mother had once had, to choose what suited her and fling aside what did n't. But shy and sensitive she accepted the made-over dresses, and all the rest of the bestowals that came her penniless way, with what grace she could, feeling that everybody meant to be kind, yet with a vague sort of knowledge of their half-patronizing estimation of her.

But sitting there now with Mr. Frear's words running in her head, she does not heed their gay chatter much; for she is building an airy castle of her own,—not a Castle of Indolence like theirs, but of brisk and busy Industry, which would raise a cry of horror from them if they could see it. Even as she builds this castle she has no real hopes of its ever becoming a reality; sometimes, however, when we seem the farthest, we are the nearest to the fulfilment of our dreams.

It was in the summer of 1880 when Kate sat there upon that beautiful Newport piazza building

this air-castle, when the Tally-ho! of the four-in-hand was jubilantly blown by young Oxford, and when Mr. Frear laughingly whispered as he said good-by,—

“You shall take my picture sometime, Miss Kate, and I will paint yours with three brown spots on your finger!”

In the late autumn of that year one of the great business firms of New York failed. It was the firm of Oxford & Oxford. Frank Oxford had to jump down from his gilded coach and set himself to other business than blowing his Tally-ho horn, and all the party-plans and the party-dresses had to stop just where they were, for the Oxfords meant to pay their debts to the uttermost farthing if it were possible. The Newport villa and the great mansion on Murray Hill were sold, and “Uncle John” and his family moved down town into a little house in an unfashionable quarter. Kate worked like a Trojan to help settle the little house; then after it was all settled she walked into the parlor one evening where her uncle and aunt were sitting and unfolded a plan to them. It was like a bombshell.

“A photograph studio!” they exclaimed in chorus.

“Mr. Bond says he is sure I will do well, and I can have a studio next to Mr. Frear’s.”

"Oh! you have planned everything then," said uncle John rather sharply.

"Oh, no; I only asked Mr. Bond and Mr. Frear, for I wanted to help; I can't be a burden."

Mrs. Oxford began to bewail and lament. An Oxford, and an Oxford *girl*, taking photographs! Of course they should n't allow it. If she wanted to help, it must be at home, she should understand.

The color came and went in Kate's face. She was usually slow to speak, to argue or explain, but now all at once her tongue was unloosed and she plead her cause with swift and clear emphasis. What she said was a revelation of herself, and all the sensitive needs and lacks in her past life with them. It was n't complaint or reproach — she did not know that she had anything to complain of — it was only simple entreaty; but it revealed everything nevertheless. Mr. and Mrs. Oxford both saw many things they had not seen before, but it was Mr. Oxford who understood and respected Kate's independent feeling and purposes, and he astonished his wife by what he said presently: —

"I think, Sophy, that our Kate can be trusted to *try* her plan at least. I'm not sure but she is wiser than any of us."

"A photograph studio!" repeated Mrs. Oxford; "if it were only some accomplishment like flower or china painting or music-teaching!"

"But I don't know how to do any of these things, and I *do* know how to take photographs; it's my one talent, and why should n't I use it?"

When Mrs. Oxford tried to answer this, her husband said rather sarcastically, "Sophy, it does n't seem as if our children's accomplishments will ever serve them as well as Kate's one talent." And Mrs. Oxford was silenced.

1880. Four, five years ago.

At the top of a high building in the great city of New York, where there are a number of artists, is Mr. Frear's new studio. He has gone back to portrait painting. One day — it was a reception day with him — a group of people paused before the portrait of a young lady who was represented as looking down very seriously at the white fore-finger of her right hand, upon which was clearly perceptible — three brown spots.

"Who is this, Mr. Frear, — a new Lady Macbeth?" inquired an inquisitive lady.

Mr. Frear smiled. "That is the portrait of Miss Kate Oxford, and the three brown spots are the marks of her trade."

"What, the Miss Oxford who is so eccentric; who is said to take photographs so wonderfully?"

"The very same;" and as he spoke Mr. Frear turned to the light a large cabinet photograph of himself.

"What! is *that* her work?"

"That is her work."

There was a buzz of admiration and question. It really *was* a remarkable piece of work, — did n't Mr. Frear think so? Mr. Frear assured them that he did; and that he considered Miss Oxford a genius in her line.

"And they say her aunt, Mrs. John Oxford, felt so dreadfully about her going into this business, and that the whole family opposed it. It certainly *was* very eccentric," remarked the inquisitive lady.

"Yes, but as things have turned out with the Oxfords, I call it a very lucky eccentricity," remarked another.

"How? Why?"

"'Why?' Well; Mr. John Oxford died a few months after their house went down, and the Oxfords have never been able to recover themselves. Mr. John was the only business man of the family. They are all scattered and broken up: Frank, who used to drive his four-in-hand, and lead the german, has gone out on a sheep ranch in South America with a cousin; another is clerk in an importing house on a small salary; the young ladies are doing high-art embroidery and painting plaques and other little haphazard decorative holiday work. There's a host of Oxfords who used to ride on the top wave of fashion, and

were thought to be very brilliant and accomplished young people, but none of them seem to have been able to do much with their accomplishments. This cousin was always a quiet little mouse, but I shouldn't be surprised if she should turn out the mainstay of the family."

"But you have not told us the meaning of those three mysterious brown spots, Mr. Frear," persisted the inquisitive lady.

"Those three brown spots are the birthmarks of Ingenuity, Industry, and Patience," answered Mr. Frear, smiling mischievously.

The inquisitive lady smiled back incredulously, and asked no more questions of Mr. Frear; but when she visited Miss Oxford's studio a few days later, she looked with keen curious scrutiny at that young lady's slim white hands, but she looked in vain for the three brown spots. Kate had become a thorough mistress of her art, and of the situation, and did not waste her chemicals in bungling blots anywhere. At this moment Mr. Frear thinks she bids fair to rival Madame Véron, for people are getting to appreciate her work more and more, and it is becoming quite the thing in certain circles to have "an Oxford portrait." Aunt Sophy has ceased to lament "that dreadful photograph business;" how can she when from the results of it her dear Tony is reaping the

benefit of his college education? And the Oxford girls — well, they laugh a little, and they sigh a little, as they generously admit that Kate's well-worked talent had served the Oxford family better than their dainty holiday accomplishments.

VIOLET.

“O H, mother dear, you will, you must let me go!”

“I don’t see how I can, Mary. In the first place, I don’t approve of your visiting where you will get such high notions in your head as you will be sure to get at Mrs. Van Voorst’s; and, in the second place, you have nothing suitable to wear at such a place. Oh, Mary, don’t tease me; I don’t want you to go, for I know it will be bad for you in the end. You will get accustomed to a life that is just as much separated from yours as the Queen of England’s, and when you come back you will be discontented, and pining for what you have left behind.”

“Mother, it is Violet Van Voorst herself that I want to visit a great deal more than anything else, though I shall enjoy beautiful Newport too. And it’s so kind of her mother to wish to give me this pleasure; and she wants me, too, not merely out of kindness but because she loves me.”

Mrs. Harwood knitted her brows slightly. She had seen a good deal of trouble, and perhaps that

was the reason she had for looking down on school-girl friendships.

"If Miss Violet Van Voorst loves you so much, *why* did n't she come oftener to see you when she was at school here?" she asked her daughter presently, and a little bitterly, perhaps.

"Mother, you always discouraged my bringing her home with me after that once, you know," answered Mary Harwood a little shyly.

"Well, I dare say I did, Mary; for that once, as you call it, was rather an unfortunate visit. There was nothing in the world for tea but cold bread and butter and cookies, and I remember that the boys had come in and flung all their fishing-tackle in the front entry."

"But Violet was so pleased with everything, mother. You know how she praised your bread, and that delicious butter of ours, and how she apologized for eating so many cookies; and when you spoke of the boys' fishing-tackle she laughed, and said it was just like *her* brothers."

"Oh, your Miss Violet knows how to say polite things, Mary; but, all the same, I should n't care to be patronized by a fashionable young lady," returned Mrs. Harwood, laughing a little, but quite in earnest.

Mary did not reply. It was of no use, she said to herself, for mother did not understand Violet, and

would be sure to think she did the wrong thing. After this conversation she was no little surprised the next morning to hear her mother say, —

“ Mary, I have thought that perhaps I am not doing right by keeping you from visiting Violet Van Voorst. You are sixteen now, and ought to face things for yourself, I dare say, and to see all sides. I did n’t mean to be hard last night ; but I don’t like fashionable life and its follies, and I hated to think of my sensible Molly being hurt by them. But I have come to think if you want to go so much, child, perhaps it is better that you should, else you may think all your life that your cross old mamsey has made you miss what you can never make up.”

“ Oh, Mamsey darling, you’re never cross. I *know* you are always thinking of my good, and this — Oh, Mammy — this is so just and kind of you ! ”

The mother and daughter kissed each other, and then the happy Molly flew off to begin her little preparations for her visit to lovely Newport and Violet Van Voorst. But, first of all, she must write to her friend that her kind invitation was accepted, and what day and hour she might expect her.

When Miss Violet received this letter she was standing on the lawn of her summer home at Newport, waiting for her pony-phaeton, and chatting to a very handsome young girl about her own age.

"A letter for you, Miss Violet," said a groom, doffing his hat as he handed out Molly Harwood's neat little missive.

Violet tore open the envelope and glanced rapidly down the page.

"Oh, she is coming! I was so afraid that she would n't," she exclaimed joyfully after this glance.

"Who's coming, if I may ask, Vy?" inquired Miss Margie Dearborn.

"Mary Harwood, a dear girl I knew when I was at Sherwood School. She was a day scholar, and used to walk over from Hollingsford, a distance of three miles, every morning, and back at night."

"Why did she do that? For her health?"

"Because they had no horses or carriages, Miss Margie."

"Oh! I thought all the people who lived in the country had horses, or at least one horse, Vy," commented Miss Margie rather wonderingly.

"All farmers do, I suppose; but Mary Harwood was not a farmer's daughter. Her father was dead, and she and her mother and little brothers lived in a little country town, — Hollingsford, three miles from Sherwood. They were not rich people at all. I sometimes used to think they might be quite poor; but Mary was so nice, the nicest girl in school. I want you to call upon her when she is here, Margie, and be very sweet to her."

Margie nodded her head carelessly, with a pleasant "Of course" to her friend's request, and the next moment the two girls were bowling along the avenue in the pretty basket phaeton, Violet holding the reins with a practised hand.

Three hours later, as the Providence boat steamed up to the Newport wharf, Mary Harwood, looking anxiously from the forward deck, saw the basket phaeton and its pretty owner, with the natty little groom in the back seat, — or, properly speaking, *the rumble* of the carriage. All the way in the cars and in the boat Mary had been anticipating this meeting with her friend with unalloyed pleasure; now, as she caught sight of the stylish turnout, with the glittering, many-buttoned groom perched on guard as it were, there flashed over her, involuntarily, all the things her mother had said in regard to the difference in her life and that of this lovely Miss Violet. One thing specially came to her, — almost the last thing her mother had said to her, —

"You must n't expect, Mary, that a girl situated like Violet Van Voorst will *continue* to feel the interest in you that she does now. You are new and fresh to her just now; but when she is fully launched in the gay world where she belongs, you must make up your mind to lose her."

When Mrs. Harwood had said this, Mary had resolutely refused to believe it, though she spoke not a

word to her mother of her rebellious state of mind. But now, in sight of Violet transformed into such a gay princess, sitting there as if upon a little throne with her body-guard, her mother's warning words came back upon her with a cold chill, and not even the princess's bright face and warm kiss of welcome could quite restore her old feeling of trust and happiness.

And it was this feeling that, like a vague shadow, seemed to be perpetually looking over her shoulder and clouding the sunshine all through the first days of her visit. In these days her letters to her mother were mostly made up of descriptions of Newport, — the cliffs, the glen, the famous old fort, and the rest of the fascinations of the historic old town.

And Mrs. Harwood, reading these letters and observing how little was said of her "dear Violet," and the Van Voorst family, commented to herself in this style, after her critical, suspicious fashion, —

"Poor little Molly! it's just as I knew it would be. She's finding out that when fashionable people are in their own world, they don't need simple little folk like her, who have no fine feathers, to reflect credit upon them. It is as well, perhaps, that she should learn this early, but I do hope they won't make her unhappy."

But while Mrs. Harwood was making up her mind to these dismal conclusions, Mary was learning quite another lesson than her mother supposed, and on the third week of her visit, just a week after the third of the series of letters which had convinced Mrs. Harwood that her prophecies were being fulfilled, the good lady was astonished by the receipt of the following: —

DEAR MOTHER, — I have waited until now before I said anything about Violet herself and the home-life here, for I wanted to be *certain sure* — as I used to say when I was a little girl — of the reality before I gave my opinion or criticism; for you know you were always warning me not to jump at conclusions in my enthusiasm.

Well now, dear Mamsey, I am going to begin at the very beginning and tell you everything. Violet met me, as I told you, at the boat. But as I have *not* told you, suddenly, when I first caught sight of her sitting in that elegant phaeton, with the sleek pony all a-glitter in the silver-mounted harness, and the smart groom perched up in the rumble, glittering like the pony, and Violet holding the long white reins in her long white driving-gloves, it all came over me like a flash what you had said about the difference in our lives as it never had before, and there in the warm sunshine I felt as if a shadow had settled down upon me which would never lift; for I felt as if you had guessed it all right, — that Violet in her own world *could* not care for me as she had in dear old Sherwood, and I should find it out in a thousand ways.

Even when the dear, pretty creature seized me and kissed me so affectionately a moment afterwards, I could n't put aside my misgivings. I kept thinking, "Oh, if this is only the first glimpse of all the splendor, what will the rest be; and what can a girl who lives in fairy-land want of a little plain country-girl like me?"

Well, up from the boat we drove through the narrowest, queerest old street, right past a house where George Washington had his headquarters a hundred years ago, and crossing through still another narrow old street we came to Bellevue Avenue, and were presently at Violet's home. I've told you before, Mamsey, how beautiful it all was, with its velvet lawn, and its piazzas and long windows, and lovely furniture, partly of silk and partly of that exquisite Wakefield rattan manufacture. But I haven't told you yet how as we went in and Violet's mother, whom Violet always calls "Mamma," who was just then coming along the hall, stopped and put out her pretty, slim hand to me, and said she was pleased to see me and hoped I had a pleasant journey; and how *then* she seemed so pleasantly indifferent to me and to Violet too, as if it was a nice, polite little speech she might have said to anybody she had never heard of.

And then directly after we had dinner in a great dining-room with Florentine mosaics on the wall, and what seemed to me then a crowd of company. It was in reality an aunt and uncle of Violet's who are staying here, and two other ladies and one gentleman who had been invited for that day. Of course they were all older than Violet; and so, of course, they talked of things that were of interest to themselves and that we did n't know about, or that I did n't at least. Well, like a

foolish girl, I felt this, because it was so different from Sherwood ways, where we girls were all in all; or at Hollingsford, where the young people are of so much consequence. Violet didn't seem to mind it, however, and talked to me in her old way in an undertone.

So things went on from day to day, Mrs. Van Voorst, who is a very elegant and accomplished woman, going into society and entertaining at her own house not only fashionable people, but people distinguished in different ways. I don't know what I thought, but I suppose I expected to be taken notice of by these people just as I used to be at Hollingsford by Dr. Ryder and Professor Roy. But nothing of the kind occurred. They would speak to us pleasantly now and then, and now and then Violet would chat a little with one of them; but we were really treated a good deal like nice children. And I, who had been used to "speaking up" to everybody, and giving my opinion upon everything, from Tennyson's poems to the latest theological discussions, and to think it very smart to do so, felt very much astonished that I was of no more importance; and I began to have, by and by, a sober feeling that all this neglect was because of my being a little country girl, with no fine relations and no money.

During this time several of Violet's friends had been to see me — young girls like ourselves — but I didn't feel at ease with them, for the reason that I had been cherishing a suspicious spirit ever since my arrival.

Well, to come now to the grand point. Last Wednesday, a week ago, Violet gave a lawn party. Stretching back of the house there is a beautiful great lawn, which is in full view of the sea, and on this, various pretty tents

were put up, and all kinds of lovely arrangements made. It was a day party, of course, and I wore my white dress with pink ribbons, and rosebuds from the greenhouse, which Violet brought to me. Then I took the black velvet off my white straw hat, and plaited that old white lace scarf that you gave me, about the crown, and twisted up the ends with a knot of roses and pink ribbon. Violet was delighted with the effect, and I think, Mamsey, I did look very well.

And I felt pretty well, too, and had a very nice time until Margie Dearborn, Violet's next-door neighbor here, started a new game, or play, which somebody brought from abroad recently, called "The Ambassador." I won't explain it in detail now, but will just say that one has to know something of geography and French to answer the questions and be a successful player. Well, though I can read French quite well, you know I can't speak it, and geography is one of my weak points.

Foolishly enough I had allowed Margie Dearborn, the week before, to think I was a very fine linguist. She had found me reading a French newspaper, and something she said, I've forgotten what, irritated me in my suspicious mood, and I replied, "I should n't think I knew much if I did n't understand French. It's a great deal easier than the English language," which is true, of course, in one way; but Margie thought I meant it in quite a different way, — that of being complete mistress of it.

Well, we went on swimmingly in "The Ambassador" until I had to pay a forfeit. Then I was sent to France as the Spanish ambassador. "From what country do you come?" I was asked. Then, "What is the capital?" And, oh, Mamsey, I answered, "Granada"!

Only think of it! and there was Mrs. Van Voorst and her sister and two or three other ladies looking on.

The next thing, I was addressed in French and expected to answer in that language. Simple phrases enough; for all these girls talk French very readily, because they have had French *bonnes*, or nurses, and most of their mothers have French maids, and have lived abroad some time. But I could n't answer a word, for I could n't understand them, and forgot what little I did know.

Oh, Mamsey! I thought I should sink through the ground with mortification as I caught Margie Dearborn's eye, and as I faced all of them so stupidly, — I, Violet's friend, of whom she had talked so admiringly, as I knew she had!

And just then, when a great wave of color was blazing into my cheeks, Violet came forward and said softly, "The Spanish ambassador has not been to France before, and he cannot understand our rapid careless French, though he can read it better than we can."

And then, Mamsey, — then what do you think Mrs. Van Voorst, whom I thought such an indifferent fine lady, did? She rose and came forward and said sweetly, "And I must break up the court at once, and take the Spanish ambassador and all the rest of this fine company to the banquet that is served for them;" and she slid my hand over her arm and smiled down upon me like an angel of goodness. And she took us the whole length of the garden, Mamsey, to give time for one of the men to whom she spoke to hurry up the supper, — for it was n't nearly ready, though she had pretended that it was, just out of pure kindness to save me from any further mortification.

And when supper was really served in the big tent, all the girls followed her example and were just as pleasant and kind to me as possible.

Afterwards when I was alone with Violet I thanked her for her sweetness and told her how much I appreciated her mother's kindness to me, and I confessed to a good deal of my own foolish feeling too. And Violet, Mamsey, looked at me in amazement, and said to me, "Oh, Molly, don't praise me for trying to retrieve my great blunder."

I asked her what she meant, and then she told me that she ought not to have allowed "The Ambassador" to be played, because she knew that I couldn't *speak* French fluently, but that she forgot for the moment. "And Mamma was so displeased with me," she went on eagerly — "she said that she wouldn't have thought I could have been guilty of such a rudeness to my guests as to allow a game to be played in which they might be mortified."

Oh, Mamsey, does n't this prove how much in the wrong I have been in my suspicious judgments? There are, of course, people in high position who are not ladies or gentlemen, but the Van Voorsts are not of this kind. They are "real people," Mamsey, who believe in the best things; and it needed just this experience to show me what they were, and to remove the little scales of prejudice from my eyes, that I might see that under all the smooth, elegant surface which I thought lacked our country heartiness, there was really the most delicate courtesy. I thought how sharply the Hollingsford girls would have joked and teased any one placed as I was. I can see very plainly that these little ceremonies and fine manners, which at first seemed to keep me at a distance,

are really helps oftentimes to the real, polite feeling towards others.

Mamsey dear, I am coming home to you next week, with not a bit of envy for all this new life, but with a new idea for the old life, for which I shall always be better, as I shall always be

Your loving

MOLLY.

When Mrs. Harwood came to the end of this long letter there were tears in her eyes. She spoke softly: "The child is right; she will always be the better for this experience. And so shall I, for I sha'n't make up my mind quite so hastily again about the 'other side.'"

LOUISE.

I.

“**W**AIT for me, Louise. Why are you in such a hurry?”

“Don’t you know? My mother and father are coming home to-day, and I am going in town to the Boston and Albany Depot, with Aunt Frances and Tom, to meet them.”

“Boston and Albany Depot? Why, I thought your mother was coming from Europe!”

“So she is; but she has sailed by one of the White Star Line, and the steamships of the White Star Line don’t come into the dock at Boston, but at New York,” answered Louise, with so glib an air of knowing all about things that Sophy Kitredge felt quite impressed, and for a moment was silent and thoughtful, her thought consisting of a sort of admiring speculation which, if put into words, would have run something in this wise,—

“What a fine thing it is to have mothers and fathers who can go to Europe, and what a lucky girl Louise Peyton is!”

"I suppose they'll bring you all sorts of pretty things," Sophy found voice to say presently.

"Oh, I suppose so; people always do when they come home from Europe; but it is not of such things I'm thinking," said Louise. "I have n't seen my mother and father for seven years."

Again Sophy felt impressed — not with the seven years, but with Louise's superiority. She felt condemned, too; for she, Sophy Kittredge, could n't have been so above and beyond thinking of pretty things, if *her* mother were coming home from Europe; and Sophy loved her mother, she was sure. But then she thought of the seven years. Seven years *was* a long time.

"You were a little girl when they went away, were n't you?" Sophy said next.

"Yes, only seven." And then Louise went on and told what Sophy had heard many times before, but what she never tired of hearing, — the story of how Louise came to live in Newtown with her Aunt Frances Moore. It was like a story out of a book, for Louise told first of her French nurse — a tall, white-capped girl from Normandy — who had taken care of her in Paris, just after she was born, and had come with the family to America seven years before. Next, Louise told how Nannette had been sent with her to Aunt Frances's soon after, when her father and mother returned to Paris,

whither Mr. Peyton's large and thriving business called him back suddenly ; and then continued, —

“I should have gone with them and been educated in Paris, if I had been well enough ; but I had the whooping-cough just as they were going back, and the doctor said I must stay where I was, in Newtown ; that I should do very well here, but it would n't be well to take me across the ocean in midwinter. Both Papa and Mamma had expected surely to return the next year and take me back with them, but Papa broke his leg in a railway accident, and that kept them that year ; then one of his partners embezzled some of the funds of the company and had to be prosecuted in the French courts, and that took another year ; and then Mamma was ill ; and so the time has gone on, until seven years have elapsed.”

As Louise wound up her peroration, Sophy's face expressed her humble admiration for her companion. Louise never used the common word when she could help it, and Sophy could never think to use any but common words, and the simplest and briefest at that. Nothing could exceed her admiration for Louise's fine facility in this direction. “Embezzled the funds of the company,” and “had to be prosecuted in the French courts!” How cultivated, how educated and grown-up that sounded ! And then, that “seven years have

elapsed!" So absorbed was Sophy in her admiring wonder at Louise's powers, that she quite forgot to speak again until they came to Aunt Frances's door; then, subdued and overpowered, as she always was, by Louise's eloquence and elegance, she bade her a soft, almost a shy, good-by, and went dreamily home, thinking to herself what a very superior person Louise Peyton was in every way, and how lucky a girl was to have her for a friend!

II.

THE first glimpse that Louise had of her mother was disappointing. She had a rather dim recollection of a bright face and airy figure and soft floating garments that smelled of violets. What she saw, as she stood in the Boston and Albany Depot, the next day, was a little woman not so tall as herself, in a close-fitting, wood-colored travelling-dress, with nothing bright about her but a bright red silk knot at her throat. The little woman looked extremely young, too, to Louise's eyes, — "Hardly older than I," she thought at that first glimpse. The next moment a musical voice was saying, —

"And this great girl is my little Louise!"

Louise looked up — no, down — into the loveliest great dark eyes she had ever seen, and saw

that the red silk knot was not the only brightness about this little mother. In another moment, as she felt herself enfolded in a gentle embrace, she smelled again the sweet, faint breath of violets. This seemed like the mother she had known seven years ago.

“But yet, I thought you were taller and larger, Mamma; when you went away I remember looking up and thinking you quite, quite tall,” Louise said suddenly, as her mother turned and took her arm to go to the carriage.

“You dear!” And Mrs. Peyton burst into a little peal of laughter, and then turning to her husband, the “Papa” whom Louise had just greeted rather shyly,—“Just hear that, George! Louise is disappointed in me. She expected a great big Mamma. Oh, I’m so sorry for you, dearie! but you must take Papa for the big one of the family; you can’t outgrow him as you have outgrown me! You thought I was ‘quite, quite tall,’” another merry little laugh; “you dear goosie, don’t you know it was because you were then so little that I seemed tall by comparison? It is like the little boy who grew up to be a man and then went back to his old home in the country. When he saw the trees that had once seemed so big and high, they looked like little dwarf trees to him. So I have become a little dwarf tree to my big tall daughter!”

The playful, caressing tone and manner and words confused and embarrassed Louise. She felt as if she were being treated like a little girl still; and she was not used to being treated so. Her Aunt Frances usually asked her opinion about things, and treated her in a very grown-up way. Her cousin Tom, too, who was nineteen years old, never treated her as if she were a little girl; and at school — well, her mother would see how things were when she had been at Newtown a day or two. She would see that her daughter was no longer the child of seven in mind any more than in body. But when Mrs. Peyton had been in Newtown a week, Louise began to despair of impressing her mother with her grown-up dignity. At the end of the week it was still, "Come here, my little big girl," or, "Put down your book, my little giantess, and let's have a run out over the hills."

"But, Mamma," protested Louise one day, "I'm looking over my algebra lessons."

"What! in your vacation?" asked Mrs. Peyton.

"Yes, Mamma; I don't want to lose anything, and have to be put back when school begins."

"Oh, that's the way you've been going on in Newtown, — cramming algebra, when you should have been cramming fresh air and fun! But all this is going to be changed. I don't believe in books in vacation time. I wish you to take more

exercise and get some roses in your cheeks. So fling down the book, dearie, and let's go out."

But this was not all the change that Louise saw threatening her own way, which she and so many of the people about her, from Aunt Frances to Sophy Kittredge, had come to think so wise and superior a way.

One morning about ten o'clock, when she was dressing to go into town with her father, her mother came into her room. As Louise dressed, she dropped the things she had taken off, just where she happened to stand. When nearly ready, she found that the braid that had ripped from her jacket had not been sewed on, and she exclaimed rather impatiently, —

"Oh, dear, there's that braid! Aunt Frances promised me she'd sew it on yesterday."

Mrs. Peyton looked up with one of her quick glances.

"Aunt Frances?" she asked.

"Yes, she told me to leave it out on a chair, and I did."

As Louise spoke, she happened to look toward her mother. Once or twice before she had seen that curiously distant, rather haughty expression on her mother's face. What did it mean — displeasure? While Louise was thinking thus, Mrs. Peyton said, —

"How long has Aunt Frances performed the services of waiting-maid for you, my dear?"

Louise blushed, but it was an angry blush.

"Why, Mamma, somebody must attend to my things; *I* can't."

"What things?"

"Why, mending little bits like that, — sewing on buttons and picking up after me."

"*You* can't do such things, — such a great girl?"

"But, Mamma, my time is too — too valuable. I have my lessons, and my music, and all that."

"'Too valuable'!" The distant look vanished from Mrs. Peyton's face, and in its place came a crowd of dimples as she flung her head back and burst into a peal of laughter.

"Oh, Louise, you're as good as a play! 'Too valuable'!" and she mimicked her daughter's lofty little way. "Why, my dear," she went on, "you're not to learn school lessons merely, you're to learn to be a woman — a lady."

Angry tears by this time were in Louise's eyes. "Well, Mamma, if you can tell me where I can get the time to do any more than I do, with school from nine until half-past one, and all my music practice with my other lessons! Aunt Frances thinks I do quite enough, and too much, now. She says a girl that does her duty, as *I* do, by her studies, should have everything else done for her."

"Oh, I see; and so *she* has done everything else for you?"

"Yes, ever since Nannette went away."

"She mends these little bits of things and 'picks up' after you, as you call it;" and Mrs. Peyton looked at the odds and ends Louise had dropped in her dressing.

"Yes, always," answered Louise; "for, you see, I have to attend at once to my lessons."

"Why doesn't she send Ann to do this picking up?"

"Ann? Why, Ann can't be spared, I suppose; Aunty keeps only one servant, you know."

"Yes, I know." Again there was an expression on Mrs. Peyton's face that made Louise uneasy, that made her hasten to say, —

"Aunty *likes* to do these things."

"Does she say so?"

"I don't know that she ever *said* so, but she *does*. She knows I can't do everything, — that I'm not strong enough."

"Neither is Aunty very strong, I believe, and she's not very young. Poor Aunty, she was always inclined to make babies of people! But come, my dear; Papa will be waiting for you. Here, put on this little wrap I brought you from Paris, since your jacket is n't ready."

With a queer, uncomfortable feeling, Louise went

down to join her father. Aunty inclined to make babies of people! Did her mother mean that Aunty had made a baby of her? Why, Aunty treated her far more like a young lady than her mother did; Aunty quite looked up to her, indeed, asked her advice about clothes, and consulted her in many ways. What could her mother mean? Her father's errand in town was to look at a house on Beacon Street that they were to rent furnished for the winter. Mamma had already looked at it, and decided in favor of it. Louise thought that her father had brought her to look at it to see if she also favored it. That would have been quite in the way of the things that Aunt Frances did. It was a pleasant, cosey house, but some distance from the school that had been selected for Louise on Marlboro' Street. Looking out of the window, Louise suddenly thought of this.

"Oh, Papa!" she exclaimed.

"Well, what is it?"

"It is too far from my school."

"Eh — what? too far from what?"

"My school, — the new school on Marlboro' Street that Mamma has seen about. It's a mile, certainly."

Her father looked a little puzzled, and a little absent-minded or preoccupied, for a moment. Then he said carelessly, —

"Oh, well, that does n't matter."

Louise flushed up, and moved away with a lowering brow; but it made no sort of impression upon her father. He was looking into closets, testing the draught of chimneys and the condition of the gas-burners. By and by he said cheerfully, "Well, my dear, are you tired of waiting?" and with a "Come, we might as well go now," turned toward the hall. Louise followed with a sense of humiliation such as she had never felt before. So she had not been brought in to give her opinion. Her opinion was not considered of any importance. What *had* she been brought for? This question was soon answered, when her father said briskly, —

"Well, Missy, now I've attended to that matter, we'll go and have lunch at Young's, and then to see the 'Mikado.'"

"Oh, Papa!"

Louise forgot everything but her delight in that moment. She had been wishing, hoping, longing to go to see that quaintest of funny operas; and here she was to be taken to see it in an hour, after lunching in the most charming dining-room in Boston.

"Oh, how good of you, Papa, to think to give me such a surprise!"

"It was n't I, dear, who thought of it, it was

Mamma; but I was very glad to have her suggest it."

"But why did n't Mamma come, too?"

"Well, Mamma thought you'd enjoy it better alone with me, — just you and I together on a little lark, you see;" and Papa nodded and smiled as if he, too, quite enjoyed it.

Louise laughed in response, and a bright color came into her cheeks; and into her heart, along with the pleasure, came a little feeling of shame for her previous anger and suspicions. All the time when she had been thinking herself unthought of and of no importance, Mamma had been planning this.

III.

THE Marlboro' Street school was a very different affair from the Newtown seminary. There was not so much cramming; indeed, there was no cramming at all. A girl was not allowed to take a dozen studies and spend her days acquiring only a superficial knowledge of them. Three, or four at the most, were all that Louise was permitted in one term. This left a broad margin of time for other things.

"Now," Louise thought, "I can take painting lessons and belong to a club." To belong to a

club was her highest ambition just then. The one of which she most desired to become a member was called the "Four o'Clock Club." Most of the members were a little older than herself, and they met to read and talk over new books, and sometimes a member read a composition of her own. Aunt Frances would have thought this very fine, and would have encouraged Louise to the utmost in it. But Mrs. Peyton was not Aunt Frances, and she laughed at the "Four o'Clockers," as she termed them. "A lot of conceited little pedants, choosing any books they please to read and discuss," she said to her husband; "I don't wonder American girls get the reputation of being pert, if this is one of their fashions."

So the Four o'Clock Club was decidedly negative, and when Louise brought forward the painting-lessons plan, that also received a dash of cold water.

"But, my dear, you seem to want to overwork just as you did at Newtown," said her mother.

"I wish to learn things, like other girls."

"I wish you to learn things, too; but I don't care to have you learn things that are useless, or to learn things the wrong way. If you should join that reading club, where the girls choose their own books, I think you would learn things in a very wrong way. You might as well try to study music

without some sort of direction. And as for the painting lessons, there's time enough for that yet, especially as you have no real taste or talent for painting."

Louise looked injured. Her mother saw it, and went on still more seriously.

"Louise, I want you to learn to be my daughter; to help me; to be my little companion here at home, as well as to be a school-girl."

Louise looked at her young-faced mother, who was no taller than herself. There was an air of the gay world about her. As she spoke to Louise, she was plaiting and arranging a frill of lace to be worn that evening.

"Oh, I know how it will be!" Louise said to herself. "Mamma is a fashionable lady, and she wants me to be something like Fido, — a sort of decoration, — and at the same time to make myself useful, as Molly Preston's mother makes her." Louise had recovered from the shame she had felt awhile before. With two pet plans going under, both at once, she had no room in her heart except for mutiny.

"Mamma does n't appreciate American ways," she said to her aunt about this time. "She does n't care for my keeping up with my studies as you did, Aunt Frances, and being at the head of my classes."

"Oh, you mustn't talk so!" replied Aunt Frances; but at the same time she sighed as she remembered how she had worked and "slaved," as she called it, to give Louise every opportunity she could to be at the head, and to outshine the other girls in her classes, and "Here was Louise's own mother upsetting it all with her fine French notions." So the winter began with dissatisfaction and disappointment and inward protest, which came to the surface in various unpleasant ways. Louise had gained her idea of a fashionable, society woman from Mrs. Preston, who went everywhere, as the saying goes,—to balls and parties and theatres without stint,—leaving her daughter Molly to the care of servants, or making her of use and ornament when she was with her. Aunt Frances had been the first to impress this picture upon Louise's mind. Aunt Frances had the old-fashioned New England idea that the mother should sacrifice herself to her children, should become, in short, a sort of head nurse and servant to them. She had been all this herself to Tom, and later to Louise. When she saw how different her sister-in-law's methods were to be, she drew many deep sighs, and with a sad certainty of ill inwardly wondered how things would go with that poor child. "There'll be a great change in her by another year, you'll see, Tom," she confided to her son.

She was right; there *was* a great change. It was not, however — but I won't spoil my story by anticipating. Yes, a great change. It began by slow degrees and by hard things. The giving up the club and the painting lessons were two of the hard things; so hard that Louise thought and acted very rebelliously and bitterly for a time.

"Mamma has everything she wants, and does everything she likes, but I must have nothing I want, and give up everything I like," was one of her bitter thoughts just at the outset. And what was she to do with the leisure time she had left from the fewer studies that had been assigned her, — the leisure she had planned to occupy so wisely? She asked her mother this question.

"Oh, we shall see presently; there is no need to hurry; 'Haste makes waste,'" her mother had answered, smiling. Then, as she saw a shadow of impatience on Louise's face, "My dear, you can surely afford to give your mother a little of your leisure time after all these years away from her."

And Louise, with a new twinge of shame, felt all at once a sense of her own ungraciousness. Giving up the point for the time, she went out with her mother on bright afternoons, sometimes to visit the picture-galleries, or to take a brisk walk, or to attend a concert or an illustrated lec-

ture or a nice play. On Saturday afternoons she was set the task of learning to mend her clothing, and of putting her bureau drawers and closets in order. This last was exceedingly distasteful ; but the afternoon walks and talks and sight-seeing had proved very agreeable. Several weeks went on in this way, varied by reading, now and then, some book that her mother would suggest. In these weeks, too, Louise knew that her mother was going out constantly into society, and was herself entertaining considerably ; but she saw little of these entertainments, for they were principally dinner-parties and elaborate luncheons not suited to her age.

There were simple, informal receptions, however, where Louise was not only permitted to be present, but where she learned to pour tea and hand it to the guests. It was after one of these receptions that she said to her mother, " Who was that lady with the pretty, light hair and the gold bee in her bonnet, Mamma ? "

" The lady with the ' bee in her bonnet ' ? " Mrs. Peyton laughed ; and then said in explanation, " That is an old saying of the ancient Scots. When a person had a new notion or fancy, it was called a ' bee in his bonnet. ' But you want to know who that pretty woman was with a golden bee in her bonnet. That was Mrs. Eyre. You liked her, did you ? I saw her talking with you. "

"Oh, I liked her so much! And, Mamma, she asked me to come to see her, and said that she had a daughter who was lame, whom she would like me to know. May I go sometime, Mamma?"

"Yes; I should be delighted to have you make friends with Katy Eyre."

"Do you know her? Is she nice?" asked Louise, eagerly.

"I have seen her two or three times, and she *looks* very nice; but I should be willing to take Helen Eyre's daughter on trust, any time.

IV.

It was a very grand-looking hall that Louise saw as the door was opened to her when she went to see Katy Eyre; and as she followed the servant up the fine broad stairway, she thought to herself, "The Eyres must be rich people, and I suppose Katy has no end of nice things; and, of course, as she is lame, she has nothing to do but be waited upon."

"Oh, do you mind my sending for you to come up here where all the children are?" suddenly asked a sweet voice as Louise came upon the second floor. Louise looked and saw a lovely face, the very image of Mrs. Eyre's; and an outstretched



"Mamma is out, and I have the younger children with me till she comes home." — *Page 91.*

hand hospitably extended bade her welcome, as the owner stood in a doorway just at the head of the stairs.

"Mamma is out, and I have the younger children with me until she comes home," the sweet tones went on explaining.

"Oh, Taty, Taty, don't do away!" a little voice cried out from the room beyond at this moment.

Katy laughed. "Nobody's *doing* away, but somebody's coming," answered Katy Eyre; "and here she is, Miss Louise Peyton, a nice somebody for you to be very kind and polite to, Miss Tottie."

As Katy turned, Louise saw that she walked with a crutch, but she seemed to fly over the floor with it.

There were two other children in the room besides Tottie,—a boy and a girl, one seven and the other nine years old. They had evidently been interrupted in a game by Katy's momentary withdrawal.

"How stupid!" thought Louise, as she saw that she was rather expected to join in this game—"some silly, childish thing," she was sure. But when Katy, with a little flush on her cheeks, looked up and said apologetically, "Would you think it rude if I just finished this game; it will

only take a few minutes?" Louise quite cordially offered to join in the game herself.

Before the "few minutes" were over, she was so much interested that she was quite willing to accede to the children's proposal for "one more game." It was, to be sure, a childish game,—a game of picture-cards, each card bearing the face of some king or queen in English history. A set of smaller cards set forth in print corresponding dates, with a droll couplet attached. Katy would read the dates and the couplet, which was funnily descriptive; and the children would find great fun in selecting the picture-card that corresponded to it. Sometimes they would make a mistake, and then a forfeit of a card would have to be paid.

The couplets were not only funny but witty, and each made a pointed reference to some historical fact in the sovereign's reign, so that the memory was caught at once. It was this which interested Louise.

"I never saw this game. Where did you get it?" asked Louise with animation.

"Taty made it," spoke up Tottie.

Louise looked astonished and incredulous. Katy blushed, and the other children laughed. At this laugh, Tottie's face took on an indignant expression, and she exclaimed, "Taty *did* make it!"

Tottie's indignation bidding fair to increase still

more if her word were not taken, Katy was forced to explain that the children had asked so many questions the previous winter, when she had been hunting up some dates in a pictorial history of England, that she had thought of this way to fix certain facts in their minds.

"And you *made* these cards, and these verses, and the whole plan?" inquired Louise.

"Oh, yes! The cards are easy enough. I drew the faces from the portraits I found of the kings and queens, and then painted them in water-colors. The rest was easier still, and great fun."

Louise began to say something of her admiration and amazement, when the door opened and Mrs. Eyre entered.

"We've been dood — we've been dood; Taty's tept us all 'mused!" Tottie burst out at sight of her mother.

"That's nice; and what have you done for Katy?" said Mrs. Eyre, smiling upon them all.

Nine-year-old Amy held up a pair of gloves.

"Yes, Mamma, Amy has sewed up all those hateful holes for me, and I feel as if I had a new pair of gloves," said Katy, giving Amy a little look of thanks as she spoke.

Mrs. Eyre sat down in the low rocker Amy brought for her, and began talking now to Louise, now to Katy, with a word for the younger ones in

a certain delightful way that was all her own. Louise at the end of her visit thought she had never had such a charming call.

And would Katy return her visit? she asked; and would she come "soon, very soon?"

"Oh, yes, I shall be delighted to come!" answered Katy; "but I don't believe I can until after Mamma's birthday party. I have so much to do."

Louise looked a little surprised. She was thinking, "How can a disabled thing like Katy have so much to do, especially in a family like this, where there is evidently plenty of servants?" Perhaps Mrs. Eyre saw something of this thought in Louise's face, for with a bright half-smile at Katy she said,—

"This is a very busy family, my dear; and Katy, as the head of my flock, is the busiest of all. I don't know what would become of us if it were not for Katy. When she burned her finger last winter, and I had to answer all my notes of invitation, I really did n't know but I should have to give up society entirely."

Louise went home with a bee in *her* bonnet. A very busy family; and Katy, lame Katy, the busiest of all! She wrote her mother's notes, and Louise had seen how she looked out for the children. What else did she do? But no doubt she had plenty of time; she was n't like other girls who

had to study to get lessons, and — But Louise stopped, as she remembered the game of English History. There had been considerable studying to accomplish that!

One day, after the birthday party, Katy was brought around to see her new friend. She came, so it seemed to Louise, flying in from the door as if her crutch were a wing, — an airy, joyous creature, bringing with her all sorts of bright busy thoughts and plans.

“How can you get time to do so much?” exclaimed Louise. “But if you don’t go to school, of course —”

“Oh, I go to school.”

“Do you?” rather faintly.

“Why, yes, I go to Mrs. Lemark’s, on the next street to us. Did you think I didn’t go because of my lameness? I’m not lame from spinal disease, or from any disease now. I was hurt when I was a little child. I was thrown from a carriage, and my left leg crushed and broken. I am perfectly well, but one leg has always been shorter and weaker than the other, that’s all.”

Louise was silent for a moment at the simple “that’s all.” Then she said, “But you seem to do things for other people so much.”

“Well, other people do things for me; and I’m my mother’s eldest daughter, you know. Mamma

and I are great friends," with a little laugh, "and we help each other as friends do."

"Mamma and I are great friends, and we help each other as friends do." A queer, uncomfortable feeling assailed Louise at this. She presently roused herself, however, and said, —

"I think your mother is lovely."

"Yes, is n't she? But you should come and see us in the country in the summer; then you would know her better. Here in the city she has so much to do; what with her charities, her poor people, and all that, — and her social duties."

"Oh, *does* your mother like society?"

"Like society? I don't know. I never thought to ask that. She knows people, just as your mother does; and she goes to see them, and invites them to see her. I heard her say once that she did n't care for just a quantity of people; but that to know and meet different minds and characters — people who lived in or out of the world, not frivolous people — was part of one's education. That is n't liking society for dress and showing off."

"Oh, no!"

"I heard my mother say, after she met you at your mother's, that by and by you would have an opportunity that very few girls have."

"I! What do you mean?" asked Louise.

"She said your mother and father had for their

friends so many interesting people abroad and here, that by and by you would find it of the greatest advantage to you ; those were just her words. I was reading the other day about Sir Richard Steele, who lived in Queen Anne's day, and what he said of a lady, — Lady Elizabeth Hastings, — that to know her or to love her was a liberal education. So, I suppose, to know some people is like that — an education. Mamma said, too, that your mother was so unspoiled by all the attention that she had received abroad! — that she was as simple and unaffected as she was when she went away, and never, unless somebody asked her about them, talked of the distinguished people she knew."

Louise felt the hot blood rushing to her face as she remembered how she had condemned her mother as a frivolous little woman of fashion, because she was "in society;" how she had, on sundry occasions, tried to show off her own book-knowledge to her; and how she had expected her to mend her clothes, and to fetch and carry for her as Aunt Frances had done, — this mother, who had enjoyed such opportunities, and had profited by them without any thought of showing off! Here was this little lame girl, too, a girl of her own age, who went to school as she did, yet found time to do other things to help herself and other people without neglecting her studies.

Louise was conceited and greatly spoiled, but she was honest; and when once confronted with the truth, she did not attempt to — indeed she could not — shut her eyes to it.

Rome was n't built in a day, and people do not correct their little vanities and sins in a day, even when their eyes are opened. Louise's eyes were wide open now, and never in all her life had she been so humiliated, so ashamed of herself. She went home with her busy guest in order to prolong a visit that seemed all too short, and on her way back she thought over and over what she had heard.

By the time she ascended the steps, Louise had her good resolutions all neatly arranged into little plans of amendment of this and that, wherever she felt that she had failed. She was in quite a glow of self-gratulation as she pulled the bell; for her little plans looked so fair and promising, so easy to accomplish! She had everything all cut and dried, she knew just what she was going to do. Alas for our little cut-and-dried plans! Standing there tingling with the keen air and her plans, Louise was suddenly surprised, as the door opened, to see her father coming down the hall with the family physician.

"What is the matter, Papa, — is Mamma ill?" she cried out, as she rushed past the servant who had admitted her.

"Hush, hush, my dear!" said the doctor, as he put up a warning finger. Her father did not so much as look at her, he was so absorbed in what the doctor was saying to him. Louise, awed and terrified, turned to the servant, "Oh, Morris, what is it?"

"Your ma has had a bad upset. She was out with William and the two horses, and something scared the beasts; and William was no good, for he was throwed at the fust corner, and your ma —"

"Oh, Morris, is — is — Mamma —"

"No, your ma was n't killed. It is a miracle she was n't, though; but she's hurt some, and I guess you'd better not go up to her just yet, you'd only be in the way."

The old serving-man, who had been around the world with Mr. Peyton, had his own ideas of the use or uselessness of some people, and on occasions was wont to express himself rather frankly. Louise drew in her breath and choked the sob that rose in her throat. Just then her father turned from the door he was closing upon the doctor, and met her horrified gaze.

"Oh, Papa, Papa, can't I do something? I — I —" The sobs were getting the upper hand.

"Hush, hush, you must be quiet, my dear! No, no, there is nothing that you can do. I'm afraid

you'd only be in the way. But, yes; you might go with this prescription to the apothecary."

The girl took the slip of paper from her father, and went toward the door with a heavy heart. Just as her hand was on the knob, Mr. Peyton seemed to recall himself from his one absorbing anxiety and said, "Don't worry, my dear; your mother is severely injured, and the doctor says she is doing well, but that we must have absolute quiet for her to do better."

Louise went out with a miserable feeling of being not only of no use, but very much in the way. Morris and her father had both said the same thing, had both feared she would be a trouble instead of a help. Once, not so very long ago, Louise would have resented this; now she began to look back to see what she had done and what she had left undone, and to contrast herself with Katy Eyre. Katy Eyre at such a crisis would have been her father's stay and comfort; all the household would have turned to her; but she, Louise, who was of the same age as Katy, was only fit to be sent out of the house upon an errand that any servant could have done. Yet had she ever before voluntarily gone forward to make herself of use in the household? She had unwillingly enough obeyed her mother's constant efforts to teach her to help herself: how then could she expect that the household

would look to her to help others in any crisis? Yes, she was only fit to run upon errands. Suddenly lifting her head with a new thought, she said to herself, "I will at least do this as well as I can."

A weary time followed for the Peyton household. It was weeks before Mrs. Peyton saw any one besides the doctor, excepting her husband and Aunt Frances. The injuries were of a nature that rendered recovery slow and tedious. In these weeks Louise had gradually accepted and fitted herself into the place that seemed to be assigned her by the circumstances. She delivered messages, and on various occasions went upon sundry little errands that needed immediate attention. She also got into the way of receiving her mother's friends and acquaintances who came to make inquiries about her condition. One day her father came down the stairs as she stood in the hall taking leave of two of these visitors. As the hall door closed upon them, he came forward with a smile and said, —

"My dear, I'm glad you can be useful in this way; and you do it very well, I'm sure. You said quite the right thing, I observed."

The color deepened in Louise's cheeks, and her eyes shone. She was of some use, some little use, though it was only in the little ways of fetch-

ing, and carrying, and answering the questions of visitors.

Some little use as the daughter of the house! She had always remembered Katy's words about being her mother's eldest daughter; and Louise was her mother's *only* daughter. Oh, what would she not have given of all her showy school triumphs, if in these weeks of anxious waiting she could have remembered something that she had done spontaneously and voluntarily for her mother, as an only daughter might have done! But she had done nothing, nothing! And now, what if — But she dared not dwell upon the terrible possibility that, after all, these weeks might not bring recovery, might not bring that sweet mother back to her. With this haunting "what if" constantly lurking in her mind, Louise went on with her daily life. Her school vacation had arrived, and this left her with plenty of time to devote to the little household errands, the "fetching, and carrying, and talking," as she called the duties that fell to her. Gradually, too, she had taken upon herself to attend to many little beautifying arrangements about the parlors, to see that her father's library-table was in order, his papers in readiness, and by and by to answer the numerous notes of inquiry and sympathy that poured in. Nobody paid any attention to this, or made any comment.

Every one's attention was absorbed elsewhere. Sometimes a thought would cross her mind that what she did was after all of but little consequence, that her father's clerk who came every day for business instructions might have answered all notes with the greatest ease, and that any servant might have done the rest far better than herself. "But Papa, no doubt, thinks it occupies and pleases me to do these things now," she would conclude with a little sigh, "and so allows me to do them. He is quite right, quite right; I ought not to expect to be of any better use." So, day by day, Louise went on with her self-imposed tasks, glad to be occupied, and getting what comfort she could from the thought that by and by, perhaps, she might show her mother how ready she was to be of real service and value,—day by day, until one morning her father came suddenly into the room where she was writing, and called out in a strange voice, —

"Louise ! Louise !"

She sprung to her feet, her face blanched with fear. What if?— Oh, had it come indeed? Her mother —

"Louise, Louise, what is it? Did I frighten you?" Her father's arms were around her, and — yes — he was smiling upon her! She stifled her sobs, and with one great effort steadied her voice: "Oh, Papa; I thought that Mamma —"

"Yes, yes, I see I was too hasty; but it is such good news, Louise! Mamma is much, very much better, and she wants to see you. I think I can trust you now. I have n't been blind, and I've seen how you can control yourself and keep quiet."

With all her pretty hair cut off, pale and thin and looking like a child, — was this indeed the beautiful little mother? But the lips parted in a smile, and the weak voice, with the sweet laughing ring in it, said, "My little great girl!"

Louise knelt down by the easy-chair. She could not say much, and there was no need for her to say much. Her mother understood; and hand in hand they sat for awhile, quite silent. It was her mother who spoke first.

"You have been such a comfort — such a help, my dear! Papa has told me all about it, how you have made everything so pleasant and orderly downstairs, and answered all the notes. I fretted a great deal until I heard this; but when Papa told me, I began to feel easy. Yes, you've been a great comfort, my dear, a real daughter, and have done what only a daughter could do."

"Oh, Mamma!" But this was all that Louise dared say.

Not the least of the lessons that she had learned was to restrain herself for another's sake. She could have cried out in joyful amazement, but her

mother could bear no excitement ; and after that " Oh, Mamma ! " she sat quite still, holding her mother's thin hand in hers, but thinking, thinking all the time the most astonished thoughts. " A great comfort — a real daughter — what only a daughter could do. " And she had estimated her work so meanly — hardly more than a servant's work.

Two years after this Louise stood in her graduation dress, receiving the congratulations of her friends.

" Such a fine essay, Louise ! Oh, I *knew* you'd win the prize," cried Sophy Kittredge, ecstatically.

Louise smiled a little absently ; her eyes were seeking some one. Ah, here she was, coming toward her ! When she was close beside her, Louise bent and whispered, —

" Mamma, did you think it sounded priggish — was there any conceit in it ? "

" Not a bit. I was proud of my little great girl. "

Half-way down the room two or three school-teachers stood discussing matters. One had been watching Louise very closely for the last hour. It was Miss Richards, her Newtown teacher. Presently she said to the others, —

"I am so pleasantly disappointed in Louise Peyton!"

"Pleasantly disappointed? Why?" asked the Marlboro' Street teacher.

"'Why?' Because when she was with me, she bade fair to be an arrogant, self-sufficient girl, always thinking of her own importance. Now she seems quite a different girl. She was always bright about her studies, but now there is something besides brightness,—she is sweet and attractive. I wonder what has changed her?"

SHARLY.

“**S**HARLY, what in the world are you sitting hidden away in this chilly window-seat for? We’ve been looking for you everywhere. Come — come down, we want you to play Fortunatus’ Purse with us.” And as she speaks, Kathie Raymond, who is Sharly’s sister, gives a gentle pull at the hand she has seized, and Sharly, half obeying the impulse and half of her own will, does come down as she has been ordered, and suffers herself to be led into the room beyond, which Kathie soon makes bright by elevating the gas and stirring up the fire in the open grate. This accomplished she goes into the hall and calls out, —

“Come, Judy, come down. I’ve found her. We’re in the back parlor.”

A second only, and then down the stairs are heard the flying feet and gay voices of the two younger sisters as they respond to Kathie’s call. Judy — which is the home pet-name for Julia — cries out at once, —

“Sharly, you must be my partner, I always beat when you are my partner ; and we want red counters,

and — Oh, Sharly ! what is the matter ? What has happened ? You've been crying, crying real hard ! ”

The other girls stopped their preparations for the game and rushed impetuously forward. Yes, Sharly had been crying “real hard,” as Judy had said ; for her eyes were red and swollen, and her cheeks were spotted and disfigured with her hot tears.

“Oh, what is it, what is it, Sharly ? Are n't you going to join Madame Merone's reading-class ? Won't Mamma let you ? Or is it the party next week ? Does Papa veto it ? ”

“Oh no, no ! it's nothing of the kind, girls. I don't care for the class, nor the par—par—party.” And Sharly burst into fresh sobs.

Motherly little Kathie, who was, however, two years younger than this tall Sharly, drew her weeping sister into a great lounging-chair and, leaning over her, put herself up as a sort of guard and protection from the kind but rather pressing curiosity of the others.

“There, don't ask her any more now, girls ; wait until she's had her cry out.” And Kathie so smoothed and softened things, and made such a peaceful atmosphere of rest for a minute or two by her sweet pleasant ways, that poor Sharly's sudden excitement calmed down presently and she was able to speak.

“Oh, girls! it is n’t anything to do with parties or classes; but it’s something I overheard half an hour ago while I was sitting in the window-seat. I did n’t mean to listen, but — I’ll tell you how it was.

“After tea I came in here, and while the rest of you went upstairs I thought I’d watch for the boy with the evening paper; for on rainy nights like this he always throws it down upon the wet steps, and that annoys Papa so. Well, as I was sitting here, Papa and Mamma both came into the back parlor and sat down before the fire. I did n’t notice anything that they were talking about until I heard Mamma say, —

“‘If only Sharly could do something.’

“I did n’t think to speak, I was so surprised. And then Papa answered at once, —

“‘If Sharly was a boy, I could and should put her into Tom’s counting-room.’

“‘Oh, yes,’ said Mamma, ‘that would be a great relief. But in time I suppose something can be found for Sharly as it is?’

“‘But it is so hard for girls — it’s so hard to get the proper thing for them when they have n’t been trained for it. And I hate to have my girls go out into the world, Ellen; it breaks my heart.’

“This was Papa again. And then Mamma said right away, —

“‘I know, George; but with your business all gone and you yourself obliged to work on a salary, it must be done sooner or later.’

“I couldn’t wait a moment longer after this. I jumped down at once and ran straight in and told them what I had heard, and that I was ready and willing to do anything.

“Papa cried, girls; just think of it — not as we do, you know, but the tears came, and he couldn’t speak for a minute.

“I told him I knew that I might do something,— that I might paint water-color pictures and sell them; that I might teach. But Mamma said that there were so many fine pictures by well-known artists that I could not make anything at that; but she thought I might teach. And Papa was so sweet, so lovely; he took me in his arms and told me how he had got to give up his business and everything, because he had met with such heavy losses by other people’s failing and owing him a great deal which they could n’t pay; that he himself had got to go to work like one of his clerks.

“It was only last night after the news of the Denham failure that he knew what he had got to do. Oh, girls! it just kills me to think of Papa going to work again at the very bottom of the ladder,—Papa with his gray hairs.” And here, at this picture, poor Sharly fell a-crying again, and

the three sisters sympathetically joined her. But out of this "little weep" Kathie, who never could remain very long obscured by any rain-cloud, suddenly lifted her head, and with a face all aglow, exclaimed,—

"Sharly, Sharly, I'll tell you what you can do! Just listen, now. The other night at Lill Vandervere's I heard a letter from Alice Vandervere—who is in Paris, you know—read aloud. It was full of an account of a great reception somewhere at some great house, and among other things there was a description of a painted dress.

"It was of white silk and painted in water-colors, a pattern of pink fuchsias and lovely maiden-hair ferns. There was a little sketch that Alice had made of the dress; and I remember that the skirt had a flounce on it that was narrow in front and made a curve upward until at the back it was a long box plait, and this was all painted with drooping fuchsias and ferns. It had no overdress, but loops and scarf-ends for ornament, all beautifully painted. Alice said it was the loveliest thing she had ever seen, and that everybody was talking about it. I thought of you then, Sharly, and thought you might paint just such a dress for yourself when you were eighteen. And now—oh, Sharly, why not paint one now and put it in a store to sell?"

And Kathie jumped from the arm of Sharly's chair where she had been comforting her sister and crying with her all in one breath, and confronted them all with a face so bright and hopeful that the clouds seemed to lift at once, and for the moment even Sharly, who in spite of her youth had a way of looking rather discouragingly on new undertakings,—even Sharly saw things in the rainbow that Kathie had invoked, and her artist's eye began at once to construct a charming robe which would be “a thing of beauty,” and if not “a joy forever” would at least bring her, not only a great deal of pleasure, but perhaps — who could tell?—help Papa just a little out of this dreadful strait. If she could only earn enough to buy her own gowns and gloves and ribbons, and the rest of the things that a girl *must* have and that counted up so, what a help it would be!

“But I don't think, Kathie, it would be a good plan to put it in a dry-goods store to sell, even if they would take it,” she broke out to her sister after she had looked through the gay rainbow for a moment and seen the vision of her creation. “I've got a better plan; now listen.

“You know Madame Pinto, how cordial and kind she has been ever since Mamma, two or three years ago, went to watch with her when she was so ill with typhoid fever. She said then that among all

her customers, Mamma was the only one who had ever offered to watch with her. Well, the other day I heard Mamma saying that Madame Pinto was really the most exclusively fashionable dress-maker in the city. Now, what do you think, girls, is my plan? Just this: I'll go to Madame Pinto and tell her all about it, and if she will, she can make my dress a fashion and perhaps get me other orders."

While the sisters were applauding this scheme they suddenly heard a key turn in the hall-door.

"Oh," cried Judy, "there's Papa and Mamma now! Sharly, are you going —"

"To tell them? Not to-night, Judy, not to-night," interrupted Sharly, quickly.

But the next day, when Sharly found her mother alone, she told her of her plan fully and frankly; for Sharly was much too loyal and loving to feel that she had a right to go about any such undertaking without her mother's knowledge and approval. For she realized that she knew very little of the world; that she was in truth — young; a fact that a great many people of her age seem to overlook or to forget in a very funny manner. Mrs. Raymond looked a little grave as Sharly disclosed her plan, and —

"Oh, Mother!" exclaimed Sharly, "you are *not* going to disapprove!"

"No, Sharly, don't be frightened. I was only thinking how we were to meet the expense of materials. You will want a *very* nice white silk, you know."

"I know, Mamma; but I was going to tell you that Kathie and I have between us a hundred dollars that Uncle John gave us last year at odd intervals. We have been saving it to make you and Papa a birthday present, but now —"

"You dear children! Of course now you must use it for this bright little venture of yours."

There was a smile on Mrs. Raymond's face, but Sharly saw tears in her beautiful kind eyes, and —

"Oh, you dear, dear Mamma!" she cried, "you do think it is a bright venture then. I never hoped for this. I only thought you'd let me try; but that you'd really like it —"

"How could I help liking it when Queen Charlotte herself proposes it?" said Mrs. Raymond, gayly, using Sharly's full name in the old play-fashion that was the habit in the nursery days when Sharly was a wee bit of a girl.

And Sharly, hearing this, knew how much pleased and touched her mother really was; for it was a long-known fact in the family that when Mamma was very glad and pleased about anything that the children or Papa had done she always showed this pleasure in a sudden, sweet, playful gayety, as if

she was afraid were she serious that the tears would come to damp and disturb the others' serenity ; for Mamma never liked to disturb anything or anybody.

Sharly had a very happy time with her mother after this in planning and suggesting and arranging the matter. And Madame Pinto, when consulted, seemed almost as delighted as the mother.

"It was just the ting ! I had heard about these robes charmante and was saying to meself, I must very soon send to Paris to my compatriote, Madame Voubert, to order a costume of that pattern ! And here was Mees Raymond, whose taste was beautiful, whose skill in painting was so fine — ah, yes ! she knew, she had seen those lovely pictures in the drawing-room — and she would rival Parisienne artists in this work !"

In this strain, half of compliment, half of earnestness, yet wholly sincere, Madame Pinto ran on in her voluble French way. But, better than this, she assisted Sharly in her undertaking so thoroughly that before a week had gone by the silk had been bought, planned, and cut, and Sharly was at work on the long trailing skirt.

She had chosen for her design the small delicate wild-rose, with its thin light-green leafage. In drooping bunches it was set at intervals upon the plaited flounce ; and as the work went on,

and Madame Pinto entered into it with enthusiasm, there grew and grew, as it seemed, upon the soft white sheeny surface of the silk, living garlands of flowers that cheated one's very senses into the belief that the subtle wild-rose scent was wafting up from the silken petals. When it was finished at last, and made up under Madame Pinto's direction, with here and there soft falls of tulle and filmy lace, Madame herself was in an ecstasy.

"Ah, it is *parfait! parfait!*" she exclaimed, clasping her hands and half closing her eyes as if she were taking a view of some far-away landscape.

It was all ready, and fitted in the miraculous way that modistes have, upon the model, on Madame's "opening day." Sharly was too nervous to be present; but Kathie, with the most innocent little air imaginable, mingled in with the gathering crowd, her eyes and ears all alert. Again and again she heard Madame exclaim in her grandest manner,—

"It was manufactured expressly for me from a Parisienne pattern, by an artiste! Oh no! not an exact pattern, not a copy, but from a suggestion; the artiste had formed this beautiful design and the result was this charming robe, which was unlike anything of the kind in Paris or elsewhere!"

And the crowd looked and wondered and admired and — criticised. And poor Kathie's exultant

heart failed as she listened to this latter comment. One would have liked it better if it had been a groundwork of blue or pink, with a pattern of lilies of the valley or daisies. Another thought the wild roses too small for Nature and the color a trying one for the complexion. And still another was surprised that the artist had n't chosen a vine with drooping tendrils — so much more graceful.

The ball of fault-finding once started rolled hither and thither with great force and celerity, and Kathie went home with her bright hopes in the dust. Sharly met her at the door and at once knew that something was wrong, though Kathie bore herself bravely. Her face paled a little as she thought of all they had staked; for the failure that looked out of Kathie's eyes was like a doom. But Sharly could bear herself bravely too, and so she said very quietly, —

“It isn't going well, is it, Kathie? It isn't liked?”

Kathie tried to put a bold face on the matter and to pass things over lightly; but Sharly was altogether too much for her, and saw through her kind devices; and poor Kathie, with tears in her eyes, at last confessed herself. In the midst of which confession comes in Mrs. Raymond, who, hearing the story, tries to comfort and console them.

“It might not be altogether a failure, for though the dress itself might not go off well, Sharly might get a little reputation as a water colorist by it. They mustn’t despair yet.”

To tell the truth, this did n’t console Sharly much. Of course, mamma would say nice things, — for mamma always said nice things when they were in trouble. The facts of the case were too plain, Sharly thought. They had spent all their money and time, and — well, Sharly did n’t put this into the account, but what she might have put into the account beyond everything was the hope and firm confidence which now seemed utterly shipwrecked. Help had seemed so near in their troubles, and now it was so far. Sharly had felt, for these past few days, in a little new world of usefulness. Now, she recalled her father’s words that night when she had overheard his talk with her mother, — “If Sharly were a boy!”

So the day passed in these melancholy thoughts and still more melancholy forebodings. About nightfall a great rattling ring at the door-bell announced an arrival, and presently Madame Pinto’s voice was heard in the hall.

“The young ladies, — yes, the young ladies and madame *mère*, also, she wanted to see them all.”

The next moment she was in the parlor.

“ Ah, such a day ! such a day ! She had tried to get round before. She was so sorry — ”

“ I know, I know, Madame. Kathie has told me. It’s a failure, and after all your goodness — ” Sharly broke in breathlessly, to cut off Madame’s many-worded announcement which she felt that just then she could not bear.

“ Failure ! — a failure ! ” and Madame fairly shrieked out her words and opened her keen bright eyes to their widest extent. An instant’s astonished pause after these words, and then a hearty burst of gay laughter.

“ Kathie ! where is Mees Kathie ? Ah, thou art a leetle raven, Mees Kathie ! A failure ! ” — and Madame’s jovial voice rang out again in a gay peal.

“ So, you know all about it, and it’s a failure ? Well ! yes, yes, yes ! ” nodding her head and setting a hundred bows on her bonnet dancing and playing. “ It is a failure, I think, that will give thee plenty of work ; that will give thee, too, a little money — just a little, ha, ha ! Why, Mees Sharly, Mees Kathie, Madame, see here, ” and Madame Pinto unrolled a handful of bills. “ One, two, three — yes, that is right, — that is thy share ; three hundred dollar, Mees Sharly. Why, the dress was one work of art, and it was bought by Madame Schuyler, who is in raptures, and who will wear it in Washington this winter. ”

Sharly was dumb with the sudden reaction, but Kathie burst out with the question, —

“But what made them say such things about it, Madame? They pulled it all to pieces when I stood there.”

“Eh?” queried Madame in a puzzled tone. When Kathie more fully explained, Madame Pinto threw up her hands with an expressive gesture.

“Oh, this is very droll!” she laughed. “Thou knowest nothing of the ways of some fine ladies. They pick, they pull, they tear everything to small pieces when they for the first time see it in de shop. They run it all down — oh, it is notting; it not fine; it not worth an-y price. See?” and Madame laughed slyly and shrugged her shoulders. And then, resuming, —

“And so Mees Kathie came away with all this idle talk, and that is why, when I entered, Mees Sharly was so *triste*, and talked to me about a failure, — a failure! Ha, ha! But listen now, Mees Sharly. I have one, two, three orders for robes like to this, of some new design. Does this please thee?”

“Oh, Madame!” And Sharly burst into tears. Even Mrs. Raymond faltered as she said, —

“You have been very kind, Madame, very kind.”

“Kind? Well, I do not much. I must send to Paris for this new fashion, and here I have a little

artist who is at my hand. Ah, Mrs. Raymond, I do not forget when I lay ill and nobody but the servants come near to me, thou visitest me day after day, night after night. The doctor tell me, 'Madame Raymond has done what I could not for thee.' Ah, Madame, I do not forget. I say then if the time come when I can serve this best friend, how glad, how joyful I will be to do it. And I do not much—a little money. And what did I get from thee, Madame? My life, my health back again. Ah!" and Madame flung out her expressive hands in expressive pantomime.

It is only the other day, a few months ago, that all this happened, and the end is not yet. But things certainly look favorable for Sharly and her hopes, with three hundred dollars already in hand, and "one, two, three orders," to carry out. Of course these "high art dresses" will never be common, for it will be only now and then, among the favored few, that they will be worn; but it is a great opening for Sharly, for it has already suggested all manner of exquisite ornamentation upon silken fabrics.

The charming cologne bottles that came out that year,—why, that idea was Sharly's! Just a close fitting of silk over a plain round bottle, and then on the delicate surface, bunches of pansies,

daisies, lilies of the valley, and a hundred other posies which one may choose from ; up around the cut-glass stopper a little frill of silk tied tight with a bit of ribbon,— and never was so pretty a cologne bottle seen.

And all this from a girl's description, from over the sea, of a beautiful robe. But the secret of it all goes deeper than that. For the secret of it is the grand reawakening of interest in all manner of ornamentation by needle or brush, since the wonderful displays from foreign countries that the Centennial exhibition opened up to us. And yet there was nothing in all those displays, nothing, that was prettier or more original than Sharly's painted dress.

MARIGOLD.

MISS MATTHEWS was calling the roll in her slow, exact manner. She had finished the F's and was just beginning the G's. There were only three G's in that room, — Gardiner and Gaunt and Gold. She began with Gardiner, as she always did, and at the sound of the name a bright-faced girl looked up and answered alertly, "Here," and almost at the same moment, by an expressive glance, which was partly made up of a lift of her eyebrows, and partly a little sideways nod, at a vacant seat on her left, she conveyed to her seat-mate the unspoken comment, —

"Late, as usual, you see."

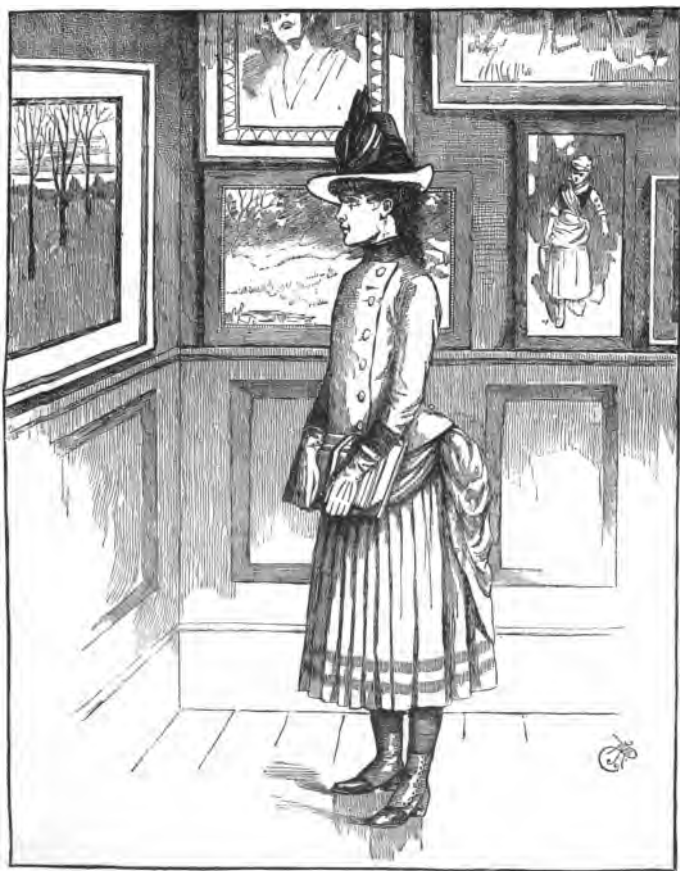
The seat-mate understood, nodded back affirmatively, and the next moment answered to the second G, which was Gaunt.

Oh, if Miss Matthews had only waited, three — two minutes, one minute longer. Waited? No, one did n't expect her to wait; one would as soon have expected an earthquake to wait. But if she had only had a fit of sneezing, coughing, or had tipped over the vase of flowers at her right hand,

as she had once been known to do, so that just sixty seconds might have elapsed before that voice of fate of hers had spoken ! But not one of these things did happen. Straight on she went from "Gaunt" to "Gold," in her even, precise tones ; and as no response followed the latter name, she looked up and across at the vacant seat, with a little lift to *her* eyebrows, and an expression that said as plainly as Kate Gardiner's, "Late, as usual," and then pounce, down went that blackest of black lead-pencils in a mark against the name of Gold. And just a second after, Miss Mary Gold herself came stepping timidly over the threshold, her cheeks flushed, the "bang" on her forehead parted and uneven, and her brown eyes seeking Miss Matthews's face with a pleading, deprecating, "so sorry" look in them.

You might have thought, perhaps, that Miss Matthews would, or should, have forgiven that second of tardiness ; have taken off that black mark just for that once when the girl was so very near.

Just for that once ! If it had only been just for that once ; but four days out of the six the roll was called, and the name of Gold met with no response. Sometimes it was one minute, sometimes it was three, sometimes it was five minutes, and sometimes the loitering little sinner would n't show that brown head of hers for more than half an hour



MARIGOLD IN THE ART-GALLERY. — *Page 124.*

after school had opened, and then she would be sent home for "a written excuse," — an explanation from her mother. This last was the hardest thing of all to Mary.

"It is all my fault, so punish me, please, and not my mother," she said one day to the astonished Miss Matthews.

"Punish your mother! What in the world do you mean by saying such a thing to me? I hope you are not going to add impertinence to your other misdoings, Miss Gold?" indignantly retorted Miss Matthews.

"Oh, no, no," explained Mary very quickly; "I only meant that mother was not to blame, and that she will feel so — so sorry, and so disappointed in me."

"Then, why in the world don't you try to do better? Your mother, I suppose, thinks that you are on time, because I dare say you start in season from your home. Now, *why* do you loiter by the way, and *where* do you loiter? A great girl like you — nearly fourteen — can't stop to play on the street; and I *hope* a pupil of mine is not so unlady-like as to stand gazing into shop-windows."

Mary colored up rather redly at this. Miss Matthews was near-sighted, but she saw that red flag of guilt, and with an emphatic nod she exclaimed in an exasperated tone, —

“So that is what keeps you — looking — in — at — *shop-windows!*” The disdain with which this was slowly delivered was overwhelming; so overwhelming that poor Mary felt as if she had had a fool’s-cap of disgrace set upon her head, and she was so confused that she could find no words to explain anything; while Miss Matthews went on talking about the vanity and silliness of school-girls in thinking so much of dress and ornament. Once the girl did say timidly and deprecatingly, —

“It is n’t dress and ornaments I look at;” but this made no impression upon Miss Matthews. She had founded her talk upon one great rock, a most hideous rock, — looking in — at — *shop-windows*, — and no little timid wave of exclamation was going to get her off that in a hurry.

What Miss Matthews thought of the ladies who lingered and gossiped over the fine displays behind the plate-glass may be gathered from her reply to Kate Gardiner’s protest one day — that *she* saw plenty of ladies standing before the *shop-windows*.

“No, my dear, *ladies* do not stand and gaze like that. Ladies pause and glance in as they pass.”

It was of no use to argue such a matter as this with Miss Matthews. She had been brought up in the old Puritanic fashion, which, even in this day, holds on to certain precise manners with

some people in and about Boston. But the girls — these very modern girls of 1887 — perhaps were none the worse for a hint and suggestion of a stiffness of propriety that was so different from their own rather too easy independence; at any rate, they had the sense to see that Miss Matthews was genuine, and they rated her “a dear old thing in spite of her stiffness,” in their irreverent fashion.

It was n’t strange that so exact a lady as this should find “little Marigold,” as the girls called her, very trying; for “little Marigold” did n’t seem to know what exactness meant. It was not only that she was tardy three days out of the six, but four days out of the six she boggled and blundered with imperfect lessons. These lessons were in Miss Matthews’s eyes the most important of all, for they were in arithmetic and grammar.

“I cannot understand it, child, when you speak so correctly, that you are so dull at comprehending the rules of grammar when you see them before you.”

Poor little Marigold was not then old enough and wise enough to explain to this dear exact lady that her correct speaking was the force of daily example in her own home, and that her failure to comprehend the set rules as laid down in the book was because the rules were written in a very

of-course-you-know sort of way, by grown-up wise-
acres who, of course, *did* know and had forgotten
the time when they did n't.

"But there were all the examples, the models,"
some keen, practical girl who reads this exclaims,
remembering her language lesson books, — "how
could this Marigold fail to understand, with these
before her? She must have been very stupid."

Well, I shall admit that my Marigold *was* stupid
on some points, — some points that to the keen,
practical girl who has always had her eyes open to
the plain, practical facts that confront her, seem
like A, B, C.

She was stupid in these grammar rules, and in
mathematics still more stupid. But in history, in
geography, in English literature, and English com-
position, she was certainly far from stupid. But
somehow these did n't seem to count against the
mathematical failures.

One day Nanny Evans, who was a great crony
of Kate Gardiner's, spoke up for little Marigold on
this very point.

"I can't see why mathematics are put at the
head of everything, and made the test of good
scholarship in all the schools. Why isn't it
geography, history, literature, or composition, I
should like to know. Here's Marigold now, who
can beat you and me out and out, Kitty, on history

or geography, but she does n't stand anywhere, to speak slangily, as compared to us, because we are ahead in mathematics. It is n't fair."

"Mathematics take the lead, Miss Nanny Evans, because they belong to the exact sciences — because they *are* the exact sciences, if you please; and don't you know that Professor Wylie says they are the greatest use in disciplining the mind?"

"Disciplining fiddlesticks!" saucily retorted Nanny. "I should like to know how much your or my mind is disciplined by working out algebraic puzzles. When it comes to discipline, why is n't it just as good discipline, and better, to have a memory full of pictures of history, as Marigold has? Do you remember last week when Miss Matthews had been talking about French history, and asked one of us to relate any fine heroic exploit that we could recall of any epoch, how Marigold told of the exploits of Henry of Navarre — of his asking pardon of the German colonel in one of his regiments before they went into battle, for his roughness of speech sometime before; and then that lovely story of his turning away and raising the siege of Paris because he found out that the authorities were sending out the poor and aged and sick, — all the useless people, — and how he fed the people who were starving, and withdrew his troops, and declared that he never would

take a town by famine? Well, I should like to know if to have such splendid deeds as that, that are true — that some one really did — standing out in one's memory in such bright colors, is n't of about as much use as to be thoroughly up on mathematical quantities?"

"Well, yes, in one way; but I don't know as it is discipline."

"*Discipline*, you parrot," laughed Nanny, "how you do hug that word! I'm sure it is n't much discipline to me to work out a problem — it's fun, because I like it. Oh, you need n't preach at me any more about the high and sacred uses of mathematics. I don't want to pull the great M. down, not I; I only want fair play and to show people that there *are* other things of — well, we'll say of equal importance."

But the good-natured and generous Nanny did n't succeed in convincing Kitty Gardiner, nor any of the rest of her schoolmates, for that matter, that other things were of equal importance with the great M. Perhaps, if she had, this little story of Marigold would never have been written; for Marigold would have found herself in a very different position, and would in consequence have conducted herself very differently. As it was, notwithstanding occasional outbursts from fair-play-loving Nanny, matters jogged on in the same old fashion

at the school, the great M. lording it as usual over all the other studies; and Marigold jogged on also in her same old fashion of — what the girls and Miss Matthews thought to be — stupid idleness and lazy neglect.

“If the girl would only *try* — would exert herself!” exclaimed Miss Matthews, one morning at recess to an under-teacher; “but she *never* tries — she does n’t care — she is the most utter little good-for-nothing I ever saw.”

It was the middle of the term, and Miss Matthews was tired and fretted with a good many things that had gone wrong, and Marigold that morning had been specially exasperating with her stupidity over her algebra.

“The under-teacher wanted to be sympathetic, and suggested that this little good-for-nothing should be severely dealt with.

“Why not send her back into a lower class in another room?” she suggested.

Miss Matthews shook her head.

“No, I can’t do that now; but I think I shall get Nanny Evans to take her in hand,—‘coach her,’ as the English say. Nanny is an excellent mathematician. At any rate, what with this fresh work in preparing the girls for Professor Dexter’s history and literature class, I shall have no time to waste on stupid laziness.”

Nanny Evans was good-natured, and fond of talking about fair play, and fond of *having* fair play, too, — if she could have it easily ; but, like a good many older people, she did n't like to sacrifice herself and her comfort. It was n't with a very good grace, therefore, that she acceded to Miss Matthews's request, and undertook to "coach" Marigold. Marigold was not so stupid but that she at once perceived that she was very unwelcome as a pupil to Miss Nanny, and this did not tend to reassure her, or give her ease. If she had been dense and dull with Miss Matthews, she was duller still with bright, impatient Nanny, to whom every form of mathematics was "fun." In the face of this impatient brightness, all the timid little questions that rose in her mind, and if asked and answered properly would have shown her the way out and up from her dull fog, died upon her lips. She was ashamed of not knowing what Nanny seemed to think everybody ought to know, and she was ashamed to ask the timid little questions that would have helped her to knowledge.

Poor Marigold ! Nobody guessed what a wretched, lonely time she had of it at this period of her existence. I don't know what she would have done if it had n't been for one outlet, one relief, and this was the great interest she took in the preparation for Professor Dexter's history and literature

lessons. Here she was in her element. But she was very quiet about it; she made no show of herself, for she never had any idea of putting herself forward in the least. The only thing that Miss Matthews knew was that this girl who gave her so much trouble with the big M. was ready enough with her lessons in history and literature. They were quite general, almost elementary lessons, for Miss Matthews was simply preparing the girls for Professor Dexter. The result was so satisfactory, however, in Miss Matthews's estimation, that she declared aloud to the whole class, the day before Professor Dexter entered upon his work, that she felt quite proud of her pupils, and was sure that Professor Dexter would own that they had been well grounded.

But alas for Miss Matthews's satisfaction! One, two, three weeks went by, and Professor Dexter, instead of owning that her young ladies were well grounded, showed week by week a growing tendency to criticise them and find fault. He did not criticise individually at first, but in a general way — declared their method had been all wrong — that they had very confused ideas and a great lack of true interest. At the end of the third week they came to the Trojan war in their history of Greece, and Professor Dexter then brought forward Homer's "Iliad." It was Chapman's Homer

that he used, and the professor was quite sure that those long flowing lines, full of rich description of the Trojan heroes and their deeds, would fix and interest these young minds. It was after the third recitation, while he was reading one of the most stirring descriptions — the “Embassy to Achilles” — that he happened to glance up, and caught two of the girls telegraphing to each other by some school-girlish signs, while another was busily counting the beads of her onyx bracelet. The professor’s voice, which was in the full swing of a musical line that he loved, stopped short, and Chapman’s Homer went down upon the table with a bang, and at the same moment up rose the professor, with a look of wrathful impatience upon his face.

“It’s of no use, young ladies,” he cried, — “no use whatever to try to interest you.”

Miss Matthews, who had been sitting for the last few minutes, unobserved but not unobservant, in a dusky corner, came forward hurriedly here with mortified apologies and deprecation.

She hoped he would excuse and overlook the inattention of some, — she was sure that *all* were not inattentive nor uninterested.

“You are right,” the professor answered; “there is one shining exception, — this young lady at my right,” and he gave a little emphatic nod of his head, and a glance at Marigold. “From

the first her interest has been intelligent and her attention undivided. Her recitations have not been merely letter-perfect, she seems to have a clear idea of the period of history that we are studying, and to be able to follow the literary chronicles that go with it. Now, I have a proposition to make, — that this young lady shall come down, with the rest of the class, to my house on Friday afternoon, and go over again what I have read here, with a set of Flaxman's illustrations to aid her in fixing the narrative in these young ladies' minds. I have a very fine set of the Flaxman illustrations, and I am sure that no one can see them without being impressed to remember the story connected with them. You are familiar with these Flaxmans, aren't you?" the professor suddenly questioned, turning to Marigold. "Yes, I thought so," he went on as Marigold answered affirmatively. "Well, then, with Miss Matthews's permission we will consider the matter settled, — that you are to come down to my library on Friday, and coach these classmates of yours for the coming lessons and readings;" and with this conclusion the professor jumped up with evident relief, and with a look on his face which said as plainly as a look could, "I'm not going to waste my valuable time giving primary instruction!"

Miss Matthews rose, too. She could not oppose

the professor, for she had a great respect for his judgment and his learning, but she was mortified through and through, and she would make one attempt to set her pupils in a better light; so coming forward, she said, —

“I am so sorry that my girls are not as advanced in history as you expected; but if you were to examine them in mathematics, you would find them everything that could be desired. They have paid great attention to mathematics.”

“To the neglect of other things of greater importance. Yes, I see — I don’t blame you, Miss Matthews; it’s been a fashion for some time to place mathematics at the head of everything, and you were expected to keep up with this fashion.”

Poor Miss Matthews! she colored scarlet at this. If there was anybody to blame, she knew perfectly well it was herself, for at the St. Botolph school she had great authority and much influence.

“Mathematics are of immense value in their way,” the professor went on, “but they are not of the large, high kind of value that pertains to literature and history and art. Mathematics cultivate the mind in one practical positive direction, of quantities and magnitudes; the study of literature, history, and art — the three belong together and make one grand whole — cultivates the mind in *various* directions, and helps to form and ele-

vate the character. But I must bid you good-morning, Miss Matthews; I have an engagement at the college at twelve o'clock."

If Miss Matthews was mortified and astonished, how do you suppose those ten girls felt to be addressed as "the rest of the class" in contrast to little Mary Gold, and to be parcelled off by Professor Dexter to accompany her to his house to be "coached," — little Mary Gold, that they had looked down upon and pitied in a patronizing way!

And then to hear their great M. assigned to the second place. If it had been anybody but Professor Dexter who had talked like this, they might have opposed *their* opinions; but Professor Dexter — well, Professor Dexter was Professor Dexter, and one might as well question Harvard College in a body as to question Professor Dexter. It was humiliating, but there was no help for it; and so on Friday off they trooped, these ten girls, "the rest of the class," with Marigold to the professor's library. They went in, ten rather rebellious and decidedly uncomfortable girls; they came out after an hour and a half, surprised, subdued, and some of them — admiring.

Nanny Evans was one of those admiring ones.

"I went into that library, Kitty," she said to her friend Miss Gardiner, who had been at home

sick with a cold, "feeling positively hateful. The idea of setting that ridiculous Marigold, I thought, to coach *us*, — to show us a lot of pictures, as if she knew better than we. Well, Kitty, she *did* know better. Professor Dexter met us — just said How do you do? and then left us, telling Marigold that the Flaxman illustrations were on the round table in the corner. The minute she touched those illustrations Marigold was another creature. She had been uneasy and shy before, and I don't wonder, for we had all of us showed plainly how we felt; but when she turned and opened that great book of plates — well, you should have seen her! She didn't need the Homer with the professor's marked passages — she had it all at her tongue's end, and she knew all about Flaxman; and what *do* you think, Kitty? — she is a little artist herself, and this is the way it came out: Lucy Gaunt, in the midst of her talk, suddenly said to her, —

" 'How you must have studied up on all this to remember it so!' and Marigold turned and answered in that queer dreamy fashion of hers, as if she was just waking up, —

" 'Studied? No, I don't think so, — not what I call studying. I *read* about it, and I asked some artists that visit our house, and — oh, it was so interesting, how could I help remembering? I like it — as you like mathematics;' and then she took up a

pencil and drew a sheet of paper toward her, and with a few strokes, there was a head of Homer like the Flaxman. 'You see,' she said, 'it comes natural to me; you must n't praise me for being what I am not — a hard worker.'

"And in the whole time, Kitty, she was just as simple and modest and unconscious! She did n't seem to remember how patronizing and impatient I had been with her when Miss Matthews set me to coach *her*, on *mathematics*. And then, what do you think, Kit? it all came out about that tardy business. We got to talking, to asking questions, and we found that she goes round by the picture shops and looks in at the windows to see what they have got new, and she goes into the galleries and mouses around there; and, Kit, she's been copying, in charcoal, a head by some famous artist — I've forgotten whose — at the Art Museum, and that's another thing that's made her tardy. Oh, I felt so mean, so cheap to think I had been so hateful and patronizing, that I had to say *something*, and I asked her how she could be so patient and obliging in answering so many questions; and then she colored up as red as a carnation pink, and said she had to ask so many questions herself that she ought to be patient with others. I knew what she was thinking of — oh, I knew, and I just spoke right out then and there, —

“ ‘ You didn’t learn patience from any of us, Marigold, it is very certain ; ’ and afterward, when we left the professor’s, I slipped behind the others, and got my arm in hers, and said sort of laughingly, you know, ‘ Now, Marigold, if you are going to coach *me* in art, you must let me coach you again in mathematics. ’ Kitty, she looked scared out of her wits nearly, and she began to say, ‘ Oh, no, no ; I’m too stupid, ’ when I just made a clean breast of it, and told her I knew now how horrid and stuck-up I’d been about mathematics, and she must let me try again, and not be afraid to ask me questions, for she couldn’t be stupider than I’d been in the literature and history class. Well, Kit, I gave her a lesson — a private lesson — that very night at her own house, and she did ask me the queerest, simplest little questions, and I answered ’em, and then she began to see daylight, and she was so pleased and grateful you can’t think ; and to-day she came to me and showed me her problems, and when I told her they were all right, she flung her arms round my neck and said I was ‘ *so kind*. ’ I ! I ! I ! Oh, Kit !

“ Well, I’ve learned one lesson, — never to count people stupid because they don’t excel in just the direction that I do.”

And Miss Matthews ? Poor Miss Matthews ! it was impossible for her to feel the enthusiasm that



"You must let me coach you in mathematics." — *Page 140.*

Nanny felt, but she *did* try to do justice to Marigold after this ; to see, as Nanny very aptly quoted, that “ there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory.”

But it *was* hard for Miss Matthews to bear the reproach of Professor Dexter’s judgment, — to feel that her idol, mathematics, was assigned to the second place instead of the first, and to know that her class of girls, that she had so prided herself upon, had been condemned by the higher authority. It was n’t to be expected that she could say boldly, as Nanny said, “ I’ve learned a lesson ;” but perhaps she confessed it to herself. At any rate, she tried to give Marigold full credit for her abilities ; and though the good lady had no eye for art, she had respect for anybody who could do any one thing well, and her growing respect for Marigold made her less impatient of her backwardness in mathematics, and thus she became less appalling and confusing to her, when she appeared before her with her hardly-conned and, thanks to Nanny, better understood lesson.

It is just a year ago that all this happened, and to-day Marigold is a happy girl studying art in Paris.

“ She’ll be famous yet !” Nanny Evans proudly

prophesies, when news of her friend reaches her now and then.

But Miss Matthews shakes her head.

"She'll be spoiled, that's what I'm afraid of," she says solemnly.

It is in vain that Nanny Evans tells her of the simple home-life that Marigold is leading, having lessons every day in other studies suited to her years, — even in mathematics. Miss Matthews still shakes her head. She has no faith in anything being simple and wholesome in Paris, or in any scheme of education outside of her dear New England and the St. Botolph school.

DOROTHY.

DOROTHY was going to her first party. She was dressed in a fine white wrought muslin, which had rather a short, scant skirt, with a little three-inch ruffle round the bottom. It had also a short waist and short, puffy sleeves, with frills of lace that fell softly against the young, girlish arms with a very pretty effect. About the waist a sash of rose-colored lutestring was tied in a great bow. The fringed ends fell almost to the hem of the three-inch ruffle, and seemed to point to the white kid slippers, with their diamond buckles, that were plainly visible beneath the short skirt.

Dorothy was ready a full half-hour before it was time to go, so that she had ample opportunity after her mother and Phœbe — the little maid — had left her, for a good many last finishing touches and final glances at herself; and you may be sure she was no more sparing of these than any other young girl of seventeen dressed for her first party.

As she stands before the glass, giving her long mits an extra pull, or settling the rebellious curls

above her forehead, or patting the sleeve-puffs carefully, she makes a very pretty picture, — a pretty picture and a quaint one, for the costume is of the Revolutionary period. As I set her thus before you, you think you are regarding a young girl of to-day perhaps, decked out for some fancy dress-party in this old-time dress ; but Dorothy belongs to the time of her dress.

She is, or was, the daughter of Mr. Richard Merridew, of Boston, a gentleman who, from the first, had ranged himself with those who protested against the exactions of the British crown. A gentleman of fortune, his acquaintance was largely with the aristocracy of the country, who were mostly, if not all, Tories. Dorothy's natural associates, therefore, were the sons and daughters of these Tories.

But visiting was not a free-and-easy matter with young people of her class, as it is now ; and brought up carefully at home, under private instruction, she had no opportunities for school intimacies. The company she had seen the most of up to this time had been her father's and mother's friends. Now and then they brought with them on their visits some one of the younger members of their families, and thus had sprung up an acquaintance which, while it formed an agreeable variety in Dorothy's life, was not of the intimate and confidential kind

that exists between young girls of this day. Indeed, intimacies of that kind would have been thought forward and improper, and would scarcely have been permitted.

During the last year or two before Dorothy's seventeenth birthday there had been little tea-party civilities exchanged between the young people; and if you could have looked in upon these parties, you would have seen a picture for all the world exactly like the quaint picture that Kate Greenaway has in her pretty book, "Under the Window," where Phillis and Belinda are sitting in a garden before a small tea-table; charming little maids, in their straight, scant dresses and long sashes and black net mits. But these were only mild, little-girl affairs, of the afternoon, and not a fine gathering of youths and maidens, as was this affair for which the seventeen-year-old Dorothy was prinking before the glass.

She had given, perhaps, the fortieth pinch and pat to the little tendril curls over her forehead, when her father's voice called from below, "Dorothy! Dorothy!"

She caught up her gay silk fan, tipped splendidly with peacock eyes, flung her red merino cloak, with its calèche hood, over her arm, and went running down the stairs, her little heels click-clacking as she went.

"Here I am, father! Has Thomas brought the chaise round?" she cried, as she met her father at the door of the sitting-room.

"Oh, there's no hurry. I only wanted to see my fine bird in her new feathers, and I thought, by what her mother had just been telling me, that she had been preening and pruning these feathers quite long enough."

Dorothy blushed beneath the half-amused, half-satirical glance that her father bestowed upon her. As she crossed the floor, the autumn wind that united with the little blaze upon the hearth to make a draught, seized upon her long sash-ends and blew them out like a train.

"Ah, she's quite a bird of Paradise! or," catching sight of the peacock tips, "perhaps we might get nearer to the truth if we got nearer to the earth."

Just then, on the box-bordered garden path fronting the window, a magnificent specimen of a peacock spread its splendid court train, and at the same moment uttered the harsh, discordant cry for which it is noted.

Mr. Merridew gave a little mocking laugh. "There, my dear, you see the Prince—you named your pet rightly—applauds and welcomes you as one of its kind. You are going into the company of those who prefer just such princes, with their shows and noise; but I hope my Dorothy by this

time has learned to know the truth and the right ; to know that kings and princes and their followers are not always as fine as they seem' outside."

Dorothy knew quite well what her father meant. She had not listened to the earnest conversations between him and his friends from time to time without gathering in their spirit, and becoming herself more or less influenced.

Mr. Merridew was an ardent believer in the rights of men, and the justice of the colonists' protest against the crown's renewed taxation. She had heard the whole discussed again and again, and again and again had been thrilled with her father's eloquent, impassioned words as he had laid the case before some wavering neighbor. She knew that if it came to the point of sacrifice, he was willing to give his fortune and risk his life for his principles.

Only a week ago, when this invitation had come for her to attend this fine *fête* on the birthday of Mr. Robert Jennifer's eldest daughter, she had heard a conversation between her father and mother that had made an ineffaceable impression upon her mind ; and this conversation was now brought forward again, as her father turned and said to his wife,—

"I feel like half a traitor to my beliefs, Miriam, as I see our girl decked out like this, and on her

way to those king-loving Jennifers. I did n't like it from the first. I wish I had not given my consent, for at the best it is inconsistent with my principles."

"If Dorothy were a son,—a young man,—it would be different; but she is a girl, a mere child, and I think, as I said in the beginning, that it would be very unfriendly and unneighborly to keep her from this visit," responded Mrs. Merridew.

"If Dorothy were a son, it would be different indeed. A son, I hope, would be pondering things of more moment than this gay show at this time; and instead of making a display of these fine diamonds would be storing them away as a fund to be used at the country's need."

"Richard, I think you lay too much stress upon these trifles. Dorothy is young,—a child; she should be allowed to have a little girlish enjoyment. It chances, from our condition in life, that her acquaintance is with those that you term king-loving folk largely, like the Jennifers. We could not very well call in the people, the trade-folk, and tell her to make friends with them at a minute's warning," cried Mistress Merridew, with a little curl of her lip. She could be satirical as well as her husband.

"Well, well, let the child have her pleasure. Perhaps I am too severe a judge in these matters.

But, Dorothy, don't let these king-loving folk make you disloyal to the cause of liberty and justice."

"Never fear, father," answered Dorothy, laughing brightly. "No king-loving folk could make *me* disloyal."

"You talk as if she were going into a company of graybeards, Richard!" exclaimed Mrs. Merri-dew. "As if these children would talk of such subjects on such a merry occasion! But here comes Thomas with the chaise, Dorothy. Now be a good girl, and remember when you take your cloak off, to let the serving-maid see to it that your sleeve-puffs are well pulled out and your hair in neat order."

The sounds of the harp and viol proclaimed that the dancers were in full swing when Dorothy alighted at the Jennifers' door, and a little feeling of perturbation seized her as she discovered that, after all her expedition in dressing, she was a little late. But a cordial greeting from her hostess, and a pleasant and admiring nod here and there from one and another of the guests, soon relieved this perturbation, and very soon she found herself tripping the light or stately measures with the best of them.

"Children indeed! she thought, as she looked about her. Here was young Mr. Carroll Jennifer and his brother Mark, and Mr. Robertson, and the

Langton cousins, quite young gentlemen, with their lace frills and satin waistcoats, and costly chains and seals hanging therefrom. And Cynthia Jennifer, with her powdered hair and fine brocade gown, looked like a stately young woman who had seen the world.

In those days dancing was not the only amusement that young people indulged in at an evening party. Frolicsome games were greatly the fashion, and after a contra-dance, little Betty Jennifer proposed that they should play "King George's Troops." This was rather childish, and there was a little prim demurring on the part of stately Miss Cynthia; but the stiff starch of new grown-up manners had begun to be a good deal shaken out of these young people by this time, with the powder in their hair, and there was such a merry seconding of Betty's proposition that Miss Cynthia relented, not without secret satisfaction.

Do young people still play this game, I wonder? It is a pretty game, with its procession that passes along under the arch of two of the company's clasped and lifted hands, these two singing, —

"Open the gates as high as the sky,
To let King George's troops pass by."

There is a forfeit to pay by those whom the keepers of the gate succeed in catching with a sudden downward swoop of the hands as they pass

under, and great amusement ensues when some captive is set to performing some droll penance or ridiculous task.

Dorothy had played the game hundreds of times, and was very expert in evading and eluding the most wary of keepers. Her dexterity was soon apparent to the young people about her at the Jennifers, specially to Carroll Jennifer and Jervis Langton, who were the gate-keepers on this occasion. They felt a little chagrined to be thus repeatedly beaten, and at last, put on their mettle, determined to conquer before the game was over.

At length, a heedless misstep on the part of the one who preceded Dorothy brought a moment of delay, of which the gate-keepers took advantage. In an instant Dorothy had seen the misstep, and bending low, sprang forward with renewed celerity. But the sharpened wits of the gate-keepers made them more than a match for her, and swoop! there she was, caught and held fast!

There was a general shout of victory, then a general rushing forward to see this hard-won captive, and know her forfeit-fate.

"Ah-ha, my little soldier!" cried Carroll Jennifer, with a gay laugh. "You see that when King George's officers stand at the gate, they stand there to win. All his troops must obey his commanding officers."

Suddenly across Dorothy's mind flashed the conversation she had heard at home, and her father's words, —

“Don't let those king-loving folk make you disloyal to the cause of liberty and justice.” And she wanted to cry out, —

“I'm not one of King George's loyal troops! I'm a rebel!”

But a feeling of shyness came over her, and she thought, “How foolish for me to say a thing of that kind in the midst of a play like this!”

Somebody else, however, was not held back by this shyness, for a voice cried, — it was a girl's voice, that of Judith Myles, Dorothy's neighbor, —

“Ah! but Mistress Dorothy has been taught to flout at King George and his officers, and even though she be one of his soldiers, I dare say she is in secret a little rebel, who has been planning and plotting to escape you.”

Carroll Jennifer and the Langtons had but just returned from a long visit abroad, and were not very knowing about the individual loyalty of the family friends and acquaintances. They only felt and saw that their pretty captive was blushing with a troubled distress, and they came to her rescue, Carroll looking down with the sweetest of kind smiles on his winning face, and exclaiming, —

“Mistress Dorothy couldn't be a rebel in my father's house.”

The bright color fled from Dorothy's cheeks as quickly as it had come, and she felt for the moment like a little traitor for being where she was. Then Jervis Langton took up Mr. Carroll Jennifer's words, and went on in such a glowing and eloquent fashion about keeping faith, and being true to one's old home, and the king being father of his subjects, that Dorothy was quite bewildered.

She had never heard just this kind of young glowing talk on the other side, — the king's side. The only really eloquent voice she had ever listened to, was that of her father, and he was on the people's side. As young Langton talked, he seemed to affect all those about him. It was like a spark of fire that suddenly set things into a blaze, which caught here and there, and drew out a fine fiery sort of talk that had a romantic, cavalierish sound to his young listeners.

The whole mental atmosphere was entirely new to Dorothy. She was made to feel that these king-loving folk had a high, enthusiastic sense of king and country, and what they owed to both.

In the midst of all this new excitement the pretty play and the forfeit had well-nigh been forgotten. Carroll Jennifer, suddenly glancing at Dorothy's upturned listening face, recalled both the play and his character and duty as host, and breaking in upon the talk, said smilingly, —

"But the forfeit, Mistress Dorothy, let us see to that. Ah, by the king's realm, I have it! You shall repeat after me the renunciation of all rebellious thoughts, and swear from this night forth to be loyal to the king and his crown."

Young Jennifer, as I have said, had little knowledge of the individual differences that had sprung up in Boston, and had no idea that Judith Myles's words hinted at more than a little foolish girlish bravado. So, still smiling down upon Dorothy, he began lightly, —

"Now repeat after me, — 'I renounce from this night forth all seditious and rebellious thoughts against his most gracious majesty King George the Third, and swear to be his most faithful subject' — but I go too fast; I will begin again — now, — 'I renounce from this night forth' " — he paused, glancing at Dorothy with smiling invitation.

Dorothy heard again her father, saying, "Don't let these king-loving folk make you disloyal to the cause of liberty and justice."

"Come, Dorothy, here is a chance for you to forswear the company of the common herd, — the tinkers and trades-folk, and take your place where you belong," broke in Judith Myles.

At these words, "tinkers and trades-folk," Dorothy recalled what her father had said one day of these tinkers and trades-folk, how high-minded and

self-sacrificing and intelligent they were, and the difficulty with which they had met this redoubled taxation, and fed and clothed their families. Were these rough or boorish or grasping men ?

The wax lights of the great candelabra sent a thousand shimmering rays upon the satin waist-coats and glittering knee-buckles and jewelled seals before her.

"Come, Dorothy, Master Jennifer is waiting," said Judith.

"Come, Mistress Dorothy," Master Jennifer began again, "'I renounce from this night forth.'"

She looked up into the kind, admiring eyes that were bent upon her, and around the splendid room at the faces that were now full of pleasant looks for her,—but she must not delay longer; she must take her place where she belonged, as Judith had said. With her color deepening, her voice faltering, she repeated,—"'I renounce from this night forth—'"

"'All seditious and rebellious thoughts—'"

"'All seditious and rebellious thoughts—'"

"'Against his most gracious majesty King George the Third—'"

"'Against—'" Dorothy paused; a mist passed before her eyes, a shudder of horror thrilled her, then with a sudden uplifting of her head, a sudden and new emphasis to her voice, she cried,—

"Against, *not* his most gracious majesty King

George the Third, but his sorely tried and oppressed people, who are weighed down with the burden of his unjust taxes."

"Dorothy, Dorothy, how dare you under Master Jennifer's loyal roof! Are you not ashamed?" cried out Judith.

Carroll Jennifer looked from one to another with an awakening sense of the true situation.

"Mistress Dorothy," he presently exclaimed, "have these rebels and malcontents frightened you into this?"

"No — no, I have only been frightened by my own poor spirit just now into disloyalty to the cause of liberty and justice," she replied.

"There is but one cause, and that is the crown's, and but one disloyalty, and that is to the king," cried Jervis Langton.

The clamor of voices arose on every hand. It was a storm of Tory talk, — vehement protest and assertion and declaration. In the centre of it stood Dorothy. She had ceased turning red and white. With her head slightly bent, her arms drooping, and her hands clasped together, she looked like a wind-blown lily, bruised and beaten, but not overthrown.

Listening to the storm of words, she no more felt ashamed of the cause she had thus publicly espoused; she was no more bewildered and tempted

by the grace and splendor of these king-loving folk. But she did not attempt to speak again, to answer these vehement assertions or offer protest for protest. She had said her say, she had made some atonement, she felt, for her first traitorous feeling of shame, and now she had nothing to do but wait for the storm to subside.

All at once Carroll Jennifer seemed to realize Dorothy's defenceless position. He could not defend her avowed principles, but she was his guest, and he was a gentleman; so he put up his hand, with a, "Come, come, we have had enough of this discussion to-night."

A nod to the musicians, and the strains of the harp and violin broke in upon the clamor of tongues.

At another signal a door was flung open, and beyond could be seen a bountifully spread suppertable, gay with lights and the shine of silver and glass. Young Mr. Jennifer bowed low, as was the fashion of the time, before Dorothy. He was not going to treat his guest with anything but his finest manners; so, bowing, he said with airy grace, —

"Will my enemy consent to let a wicked Tory serve her?"

Dorothy was not so grown up out of her childhood as she looked, and the thought that she must sit at table with those whose clamor of speech had

just assailed her, was unbearable, and she shrank back with so dismayed a face that both Carroll and his sister Cynthia felt touched with pity.

"We have been making too much of this," said Cynthia in an undertone to her brother. "She is a child, after all, who has been showing off a little, and does not know the full meaning of what she has said. You see she is sorry enough for it now."

Low as this was spoken, it reached Dorothy's ears.

Perhaps if she had been older, she would have been content to let it pass, satisfied that she had defined her position sufficiently; but her sensitive conscience still stung her for her momentary wavering, and her father's words haunted her.

She must be true to the very last, or her truth was worth nothing, she reasoned, and lifting up her head, began to speak again. Oh, how hard it was, — how much harder than at first, before she knew how sharp could be tongues that had so late been friendly.

"No, no," she cried clearly and distinctly, — for they must all hear, — "I did not say what I did, to show off. I spoke because I wanted to be true and honest. I was ashamed at first of — of my friends — of our cause; I was afraid to speak at first — and then, after, I was ashamed of *that* — of

my cowardice. Oh! I know what I say, I know what I say. You must not take me for what I am not; I am a little rebel to the king's cause; I believe in the people's rights, and not in the crown's, and I ought not to have come here, — I ought not to have come."

The clear voice faltered and fell, and the next moment poor Dorothy felt that she had disgraced herself forever before them all, as she burst into a flood of uncontrollable tears.

Then it was that a new voice was heard, — a deeper, older voice. It was low-toned, yet very distinct, and there was an odd thrill, a sort of quiver of emotion, to it, as it said, —

"Come, Mistress Dorothy, rebel or no rebel, you have shown a courage that we may all doff our hats to. I only hope that every king's soldier may prove his truth and loyalty to the king's cause as bravely, if he should be beset by temptation. And you, my fine young Tories," turning to the young men of the company, "I hope that you will always be able to give your meed of admiration and respect to such kind of courage, wherever you find it. Come, Mistress Dorothy, let us go and be served with some of these dainties that are prepared for us; and we will see if a Tory syllabub will not take away the taste of those tears," smiling benignly down upon her.

“ You are a little rebel and mine enemy, for I am one of the king’s stanchest defenders, and hope to conquer all rebels ; but I am proud to have such a rebel for my guest to-night, I assure you ; ” and Mr. Jennifer bent down his powdered head in a fine obeisance as he offered Dorothy his arm.

MARGARET.

MARGARET RAYMOND had just tied on her new poke bonnet with its cloud of plumes over her bright blonde head, and was at the mirror in her room admiring herself in a frank innocent fashion while she waited for the carriage to come round to take her down over the Back Bay to call upon her friend Miss Prissy Endicott.

"I wonder if Prissy will like my bonnet," she thought. "Prissy is very particular, and does n't take to new styles. She says it's bad taste, 'bad form,' as the English people call it, to rush into new fashions at once, 'specially when they are striking; and I suppose this poke is rather striking, but I like it, it's so soft and furry, and like one of Kate Greenaway's picture bonnets."

Thinking thus, Margaret turned her head this way and that, to get various views of her quaint bonnet, and then she took out her little gold watch, and found that Michael, the coachman, was fifteen minutes late, "and I promised Prissy I would be there at ten precisely," she said aloud.

One, two, three, four, five minutes longer, and just as Margaret was about to ring the bell and send a peremptory word to the stable for the delaying Michael, she saw him come driving round to the door at the top of his speed.

"You're late, Michael," she said to him in a very dignified way — a good deal like Priscilla Endicott's way — as she stepped into the carriage. Michael touched his hat.

"Yes, miss, I *am* a little late, but my little Pat, he tuk a sore throat the night afore last, and I wint for some doctor's stuff this marnin', and I had to wait for the 'pothecary fellow to put it up, yer see, and so I got belated like," and Michael touched his hat again by way of apology.

Margaret said nothing to this. She knew very well that Priscilla Endicott would have administered a very lady-like reproof to Michael in some way, because it was Michael's besetting sin to be behind time and then to offer the most plausible apologies.

But Margaret had a very soft heart — Priscilla called it weak — and this soft heart stayed the dignified reproof that was in her mind, and by-and-by, when the carriage went rolling down Commonwealth Avenue, she said to Michael, —

"I'm sorry about little Pat, Michael."

Michael turned his broad, wind-beaten face toward her.

"Thank yer, miss," he said heartily ; and then presently, "and I'm real sorry I kep' yer waitin', Miss Margaret. It sha' n't happen agin, now, I tell yer."

Priscilla was on the lookout as they drove up, and came running out in her cloak and bonnet with that quick, alert step of hers, and Margaret knew that Priscilla knew to a minute how late they were; so as quickly as she could she explained matters to her. Priscilla laughed at this explanation.

"You're such a goose, Margie," she exclaimed. "You believe everything these creatures tell you. Michael will tell you some day he has been at death's door sure, when he's been round at Flannigan's meat-shop smoking a pipe all the time, and you'll believe it."

Margaret laughed at Prissy's clever imitation of Michael, but she turned the conversation to the subject of her new poke bonnet, and this proved so exciting that Michael and kindred matters were completely forgotten.

The two girls were on their way to a committee meeting of a little society to which they belonged. The society was called The Little Helpers Society, and grew out of a remark that Margaret's mother had made one day the winter before, when Prissy and Margie and two or three other young girls

had assisted her through some charity work very satisfactorily.

She was quite astonished to find that they had accomplished so much in so short a time, and she had exclaimed out of this satisfaction and surprise, —

“Why, you ought to organize a society, girls, and call it ‘The Little Helpers Society.’”

The girls caught at this at once, and it wasn't long before they had formed a flourishing little band which grew to be such a success that they had actually rented a room, where on Saturday mornings they held their committee meetings, as they called them, and on Saturday afternoons the little flock of children whom they had gathered together from the alleys and by-places of the city were invited to come and spend two or three hours in games and a general jolly and sometimes helpful and industrious play-time.

Their object was to give little helps in ways that the larger organizations could not attend to, and so they hunted up the children of the mothers who sought help of the larger societies, and in various ways tried to help, as Margie said, “to have a better time;” and one of these ways was inviting them to these Saturday afternoon parties.

One of the most alluring of the pleasures on these afternoons was the little tea-party with which

they finished off. The "tea" was only "cambric tea,"—good wholesome milk dashed with hot water, and a lump of sugar; but it was served out of cunning cups and saucers, and the children themselves each took turn in learning how to pour and serve it.

There was also bread and butter and cake, for Margie insisted that it should be cake and not gingerbread. The cake should be plain, but it should be cake.

"Children think so much of cake, the very name of it is a treat to them," said soft-hearted Margie, who, though sixteen years old, had not so far outgrown her childhood that she couldn't recall her ten-year-old whims and fancies.

Prissy had held out against this for some time.

"People shouldn't be brought up to like things above their station," she had said very decidedly.

"According to that, we should give them only crusts of bread," Margie had returned.

Prissy gave in after this, but she had never given up the belief that Margaret's ideas were rather demoralizing; and so when they went in to the committee meeting on this Saturday morning when Michael had made them late, and Mary Arlington, the secretary, met them with the intelligence that that little Lenny Lannergan had been very impertinent about the nice new hood they had sent

her, in fact had given it away to another girl with the remark that she was n't going to wear any such stuff, — Prissy exclaimed, with a sort of I-told-you-so expression, —

“That comes of pampering such people! I thought when Margie asked the little minx what color she liked best that she would take advantage of it.”

“Yes, but when she told me she liked red, I meant that she should have the red hood, and she ought to have it, and I suppose she resented it when she found that we had n't respected her choice after all,” said Margaret in a distressed voice.

“Rubbish!” spoke up Prissy. “I had the distribution of the hoods, and they were distributed by lot, Margie, you know very well, and there were just so many red; just so many brown, and just so many blue, and it happened that the brown one fell to Lenny Lannergan. The mistake was in your asking Lenny what color she liked best.”

“But I did n't know then, Prissy, that you were going to manage the distribution that way. You know that was a second thought of yours. I don't say but it was a very good way, but I do think, Prissy, after I had asked Lenny to choose, the distribution might have been different.”

"But the hoods were given us,—so many of each color; and every child could n't pick and choose. Suppose all of 'em had wanted a red one?"

"Well, I would have gone to Mr. Jordan and told him just how it was, and he would have exchanged and given me red ones; it would n't have made the least difference to him."

"O Margie, *how* unpractical you are!" cried Prissy; "there must be method and system and all that."

"But, Prissy, we did n't set out to have a great charitable institution, where everybody was to be managed by method. We are just 'Little Helpers' who were going to help poor children to have a better time. Poor people have so much of method, of being treated like machines."

"Well, Margie, I suppose you want to improve their minds, and teach them self-control, don't you?"

"I never thought of it just in that way," answered Margie, hesitatingly. "I wanted to make them happier. I'm sure I did n't wish to harm them."

"But you would harm them if you encouraged them to think all their whims and notions must be indulged. Everybody is harmed by that kind of thing," returned Prissy, with the air of her grandmother.

Margie thought of the children she had seen the day before picking up bits of coal out of an ash-heap, and wondered if Prissy would have thought there was much chance of *their* being spoiled by the indulgence of their whims and notions. She said nothing further ; she not only loved Prissy, but she had a great respect for her energy and practical ability, knowing very well that she lacked both herself. So they parted pleasantly after the committee meeting was over, Prissy saying as she jumped out of the carriage at her own door,—

“I shall see you at the concert this afternoon, I suppose.”

“No, I don’t believe I shall go,” answered Margie.

“Not go !” exclaimed Prissy ; “why, you told me that you were certainly going.”

Margie flushed, then said in an embarrassed way, “I’ve got something else to do, I find.”

Prissy was too much of a lady to press the point, though she was really very curious.

“I’ll bet anything,” she said to herself, “that Margie is going to a kettle-drum at those horrid Damer girls’ ; she never likes to tell me when she goes there ;” which was very true, for Prissy was a little of a tyrant in her brisk, energetic way, and Margie was a bit of a coward, just made to be

tyrannized over, and she shrank from Prissy's sharp little comments upon her friends.

But Prissy, in this case, was never more mistaken in her supposition. Margie was not going to the Damers' kettle-drum, though on her table reposed the prettiest possible card of invitation.

What would Prissy have said if, instead of sitting there in Music Hall, listening to Mendelssohn's and Wagner's music, she could have looked down and across a certain street not far from Mount Vernon Street, and seen Margie going up the steps of the house where the Little Helpers had their room? What would she have said if she could have seen Margie, five minutes later, talking with "that little minx" Lenny Lannergan?

Lenny was the hard case in the flock of children the Helpers had in charge. She would not wash her hands, nor comb her hair out of its rough tangle, nor try in any way to keep her scant clothing decent, as she had been taught to do by the Helpers; and for these sins she would long ago have been turned out of the tea-party company, but for soft-hearted Margie, who, as her brother Jack said, was "always for the under dog in the fight."

If Prissy had heard the opening of Margie's talk with Lenny she would have felt very triumphant, for "that little minx" was a particularly hard case that afternoon, and met Margie's ques-

tions about the hood with a reckless defiance that was appalling.

"Yes, I gived it away ter 'nuther girl," she answered Margie; "you ast me ter chuse and I chused red. I hed lots of old dirt-colored things give me; poor folks allers has;" and she looked at Margie with a straight bold glance that seemed to call her to account.

Then Margie explained how it had happened that she had not got her choice.

The child listened to her coldly, still watching her with that bold glance; but as Margie went on and told how sorry she felt, how she would have remedied it if she had known of it, the bold glance softened, the great dark eyes fell, and the little dirty fingers pulled and twisted at her jacket in an embarrassed, nervous fashion.

Presently the child glanced at these dirty fingers of hers and then at Margaret's white fingers, that held in a loose clasp the pair of six-buttoned gray kid gloves she had just drawn off.

"If I hed such things to wear as them, I'd keep *my* hands clean." She touched as she spoke, with a soft, timid touch, the silver-gray gloves, and then the white delicacy of Margaret's hands. There was no look of defiance in her face. In her way, as well as she knew how, she was explaining herself and her short-comings.



"Oh, don't yer! don't yer!" — *Page 171.*

Margaret tried to speak, but there came a knot in her throat. She seemed to see all at once as never before the great and terrible difference between her lot and such a lot as Lenny's. The difference stood before her like an accusing angel, and she burst into tears. At first Lenny looked at her wondering and scared; then suddenly she flung herself on the floor, and in a passion of sobs cried, —

“Oh, don't yer, don't yer! I did n't mean fur to sass yer, I did n't. 'T was t' other one did it; 'tain't you's to blame, it ain't, 'tain't never you.”

Margaret was electrified. For a moment she joined her sobs with those of the child; then as one and another began to look into the anteroom where they sat, she saw the necessity of controlling herself, and presently with a word or two of comfort for Lenny, who had grown quieter with the example that she set her, the two went into the larger apartment where the afternoon tea-party was in progress, under the supervision of Alice Arlington.

Two months after this the grand anniversary festival of the Little Helpers Society was in preparation.

At this festival every child of their flock was to bring a specimen of something she had been taught to do during the year, — a nicely-mended garment, a pair of darned stockings, or a newly-made apron,

or any other simple piece of useful work to show her progress; and after the work was examined, every child was presented with a gift, and the gift was somewhat proportioned to the good behavior of the child and the nicety of the work.

Margie had said to Prissy, "*I'll* prepare Lenny's gift."

Prissy had laughed and returned, —

"You're going to make up to that youngster for the loss of the red hood; I can read."

When the girls met finally the day before the festival, each one brought her contribution of gifts for inspection and arrangement.

There was a comfortable display of nice warm little garments, gloves, mittens, jackets, and shoes. Prissy had specially followed her practical bent, and produced good stout pairs of stockings and petticoats. There was but one toy amid the collection; they had all followed Prissy's practical suggestions and hints.

Prissy had a great deal of influence over others. Not a toy except a beautiful French doll, which Margie brought forward rather shyly after all this comfortable practical display.

Prissy reached forward and took the doll in her hands with an indescribable look.

The doll was one of those French parian-headed dolls, with lovely blonde hair and blue eyes. It

was about ten inches high, and dressed, not in the usual dollish way of fancy furbelows and ruffles, and looped overskirts, but in a charming child's dress of deep crimson cashmere, gored from the shoulder down; and over this was a high white apron, with long sleeves; and as Prissy looked she saw that there was a complete set of under-clothing with buttons and button-holes, and a pair of fine little stockings and boots. A little street jacket of thick cloth went with this, and on the blonde head was a red hood with a little border of lace.

The whole outfit of the doll was exquisitely made, as if for a living little child. Prissy took it all in, and then — it was n't in her human nature to keep still — she had to speak.

"Margie," she said, "will you let me ask you why you took all this pains with this clothing?"

"Because I thought Lenny would like it," Margaret answered simply.

"I think some well-brought-up little girl who lives on Beacon Street or Commonwealth Avenue would appreciate this nicety, Margie, but am sure Miss Lenny would have much preferred a gay silk rag of a gown and a big hat with a feather on it for her doll; and she would have dispensed with these pretty petticoats and things for the sake of that finery," replied Prissy, elevating her eyes.

Prissy predicted that the other children would be demoralized by Lenny's doll; that they would each and all be dissatisfied with the sensible things they had had, and think it very strange that naughty Lenny should have such a toy. They *did*, of course, show great interest in Lenny's treasure, and gathered about her in full force.

"And this will be the way every Saturday!" cried Prissy, vexedly. "She'll bring that doll here every Saturday, until the children are demoralized."

But when next Saturday came, neither Lenny nor the doll appeared.

Another Saturday brought the same result, or no result, and still another, and still no Lenny.

Margie, who was down with a sore throat, only heard of this after three weeks of absence. Then she put on her bonnet and went down into the North End alley where Lenny lived. She knew that the child must be ill.

"Sure," said the big Irishwoman who met her at the door of the tenement-house, "didn't ye know that Missis Lannergan had gone to New York to live? She wint just three weeks agin t'morrer. She hed a letter coom to her from a brither o' hers that he'd got work for her in a great place fur to make the flowers she learnt to do in France. She was a Frinchwoman, yer know,

miss, and she married a feller—a lad who wint to the bad and drunk hisself to death.”

So Lenny was a little French girl, on her mother's side. That accounted for her keen eye for beautiful colors and forms, and her hatred of the dirt-colors.

One, two, three years went by after this, and the Little Helpers Society had grown to be one of the great helps, though it did not change its old name.

Its early members had become young ladies of nineteen and twenty. One of these young ladies—our Margie—one bright, cold December day, was summoned downstairs into the reception-room, to see a visitor.

“You don't know me, Miss Margaret,” said the visitor. “I'm Lenny Lannergan.”

Margaret put out both hands. “Not little Lenny whom—” Margaret paused.

“Yes,” took up her visitor, smiling and blushing, “little Lenny who gave you so much trouble, Miss Margaret.”

“But you have changed so, Lenny,” said Margie. “You have grown from a little girl to a big one in these three years.”

“I was thirteen when you knew me—before I went away, Miss Margie, but very small and very ignorant for a girl of my age; but I have changed

in other ways, Miss Margaret, and it is you and that dear, beautiful doll that have helped me to the change."

"That doll!"

"Miss Margie, I was always left a great deal to myself, for my mother was busy with her work and never very well, and children fretted her, and as I had nobody to care how I looked, I didn't care, and when I looked at you, Miss Margaret, when you talked to me, I used to think, 'Oh, it's easy for the likes of her to keep her hands clean and white, with everything nice about her, and people at home to care.'

"I was very ugly and miserable then, Miss Margaret. The first time I got to think that I was anything more than a little savage that nobody wanted, was when you explained to me about the hood, and cried for me; and then after that when you gave me that beautiful doll — O Miss Margaret, I could n't tell you how I felt! I never knew what it was to be so happy. before, Miss Margie. I named the doll that very night after you, and I felt like — you won't care, will you, Miss Margie? — I felt like as if I'd got a sister."

Margie smiled and nodded, though the tears were in her throat and in her eyes.

"And that night when I undressed her and put on her little white nightgown and laid her on my

bed, I got a piece of an old towel and a tub of water and washed myself from head to foot, that I might be fit to lie beside my new sister ; and after that I don't think you would have known me, Miss Margaret, I kept myself so tidy.

"I did n't do it all at once, for the old habit was strong on me ; but I never took my Margie up with soiled hands that I did n't put her down again and make them clean. She seemed so alive to me, and I felt that I was n't fit company for her if I was n't nice ; and I got to mending my clothes and washing them, and when I learned flower-making and could earn something, I bought me a fresh gown and a fresh white apron, and then I felt for the first time as if I were good enough for my sister.

"Miss Margaret, it is just as if you had given me a home and saved my life, for I never felt alone after you gave me Margie, and I felt so much alone before ; and I grew happy and wanted to be good, and life seemed like another thing."

When presently Lenny rose to go, and Margaret found that this young girl had been sent by the house she worked for to take flower commissions from business firms in the city, she realized what a change had indeed come to her protégée ; and thinking of it hour after hour, she said to herself, —

"I will never be afraid to trust my own impulses again, though Prissy should disapprove, and try

her best to talk me out of them. She thinks I am weak ; but everybody ought to work after her own light, her own way, and I 'm sure I should be weaker to try to work after her light, and way, when I don't sympathize with either."

PATTY.

“**T**HERE comes Hannah; now she will tell us all about it. Oh, dear! but she has turned the other way. Hannah! Hannah!”

The shrill voice raised to its highest pitch rings down the mall, and reaches the ears of the young girl who has “turned the other way.”

“There, she has heard; she is coming back,” cries the owner of the shrill voice — another young girl — to her three companions, as Hannah lifts her head and then bends her steps toward them. Presently the five are standing together in a little group by the big elm-tree.

Five girls, their ages ranging from ten to fourteen. And how their tongues chatter! First one, then the other asks a question; then they all four fall to asking questions together, until Joanna Winslow cries out impatiently, —

“We don’t give Hannah a chance to speak, we beset her so. Let her tell the story her own way.”

In the lull that follows this rebuke, Hannah Boylston goes on to tell her story to her four eager listeners. It is an old story now, but it was a new story then, and told all over Boston that day, and

indeed for many a day after it happened, with all sorts of exaggerations and additions.

But Hannah Boylston was the daughter of the Rev. Matthew Boylston, and of course her story would have neither exaggerations nor additions; then besides, she was an eye-witness, and her own brother was the hero of the story.

"It was this noon, after school was over," said Hannah, with a little air of slow dignity, "that the boys went to the mall thinking they'd have a good slide before the soldiers had time to trouble 'em, for our Miles had found out that at twelve o'clock the soldiers were mostly out of the way.

"Well, sure enough, just as he thought, not a red-coat was to be seen except the sentry, who was over at the north side of the mall, and far away from the pond; so the boys started off in fine spirits. But what do you think those bad, meddling red-coats had done, eh?"

Hannah paused here at this question, with the true instinct of the story-teller, to give force and effect to what was coming. After her companions had satisfied her by a chorus of exclamations, she took up the thread of her story. "They had broken the ice of the pond through and through, and from end to end."

"O Hannah!" broke forth her listeners at this announcement of enormity.

“And what *did* the boys say then?” inquired little Patty Endicott.

“I’ll tell you what they *did*,” said Hannah, with great pride in her tones; “they just made up their minds then and there that they would n’t stand being cheated out of their rights any longer. They’d always had that part of the mall for their play-ground, until these soldiers of General Gage’s had set up that *they* had a better right, which they had n’t at all, being only wicked tools of the enemy and ‘*interopers*,’ my father says,” — she meant interlopers, — “so they first ordered them away from the mall, and then, when the boys did n’t mind this order, they threw sand on the pond, so that they should n’t slide there, and pulled their beautiful snow-houses down. But the boys swept the sand off, and built up the snow-houses again in spite of them.”

There was another chorus of “oh’s” and “ah’s,” and a final wonder and question of why these wicked “interopers” should wish to do such things to tease a parcel of innocent boys.

“I’ll tell you why,” responded Hannah, wisely; “it is because they want to teach everybody, even the children, that they are masters here now; I heard Master Carew say so.”

“Some folks say the boys were saucy to the soldiers and threw stones at ’em, and so made ’em mad,” piped up Patty Endicott.

Hannah did n't relish this little "pipe" of Patty Endicott's.

"My brother Mark knows how it was exactly, and he told me what I am telling you," she cried out here, rather sharply; "and Mark has been taught not to tell lies, and not to be saucy to his elders!"

Hannah had all the formal little ways and modes of speech that were common to that time, rather intensified, perhaps, by her being the oldest child in her father's family, and therefore brought into contact more with grown-up people.

Little Patty Endicott had been trained in the same formal fashion, but she was of a gay, independent disposition, not at all disposed to primness, or to taking things on authority without question or demur, like Hannah.

When, therefore, Hannah made this dignified yet sharp reply, Patty made a funny little contortion of her pretty mouth, and then with a sly imitation of Hannah's manner, and dropping a saucy mock courtesy, she said,—

"I crave your pardon, Mistress Hannah, but I heard Elder Marvin say the other day that boys were generally in a wild and ungodly state, and their word not to be relied upon."

Hannah grew as red as Patty's red cloak in her amazed indignation. That anybody should dare

to insinuate that *her* brother, the son of the Rev. Matthew Boylston, was in a wild and ungodly state!

"O Hannah, don't mind Patty," broke in Joanna Winslow, here; "Patty is only a foolish little girl, so do please go on with your story."

Thus flatteringly entreated, Hannah, nothing loath, went on, turning her back, however, upon Patty as she did so, which only enabled Patty to play off sundry little pranks in pantomime for the amusement of her companions. But even naughty frolicsome Patty was soon so interested that she entirely forgot her prankishness.

"The boys were so indignant when they found that smooth beautiful ice broken," said Hannah, taking up the thread of her story again, "that they determined to go to headquarters and make a complaint; and as they were all together then, they thought they would go that very moment to the Province House and see General Gage himself.

"At first the black serving-man at the Province House began to scold them, and told them that they could n't see the General, and that they must go away. General Gage, who was in the room, overheard this talk, or overheard the loud voices, and came out to the door to see what it all meant.

"Then Tommy Littleton sprang forward and began to tell how the whole winter long they had

been persecuted and ill-treated by the British soldiers, and driven away from their old play-ground, which they had had ever since they had been old enough to walk, and where they had never done any harm or mischief to anybody.

"The General looked so savage at first that the boys thought he was going to order them arrested.

"'What!' he said, 'have your fathers been teaching you rebellion, and sent you here to declare it?'

"'Nobody sent us,' answered Tommy Littleton; and then he told the whole of the story about the broken ice and the sand and the snow-houses and everything, and how only yesterday the soldiers called them, when they had complained of such treatment, young rebels, and told them to help themselves if they could!

"General Gage when he had heard all this was indignant with his soldiers, and he made a speech right there, and said they were brave boys, and that he would see that they were not molested any more, and that the soldiers should be severely punished.

"The boys were so pleased that they swung their caps and hurrahed three times, and the General bowed them off as pleased as they. I told Mark it was n't right for them to cheer the enemy's general, but he said they only hurrahed for his justice to

them. A little while afterwards Master Carew overheard him say to one of his officers that the very children of Boston draw in a love of liberty with the air they breathe."

With renewed clamor of appreciation the girls received the conclusion of this story. Patty alone seemed less voluble. Her tongue, which usually upon every occasion went click-clack, was almost silent. What was the small girl thinking of so earnestly? Where, into what dream-country, were those great brown eyes looking with that wistful, far-off expression?

I will tell you. Patty was full of dreams and fancies; she had a rich imagination and a warm heart. Though she was only eleven years old, she had read more than most girls of that time. What she had read was mostly history, of heroic deeds, and accounts of travellers and discoverers; for in 1770, special story-books for boys and girls were not plentiful as they are now.

Such books, however, as Patty had fed on, had matured her mind in some ways far beyond the minds of the girls in *this* day, who read only gay little modern tales of fiction.

The account that she had just heard of these boys of her acquaintance, — their determination and pluck, and the respectful admiration it had called forth from the British general, who now held the

town under King George's authority, — had fired her youthful mind with a sort of ardor to do and dare some patriotic thing for the good of her country.

"If I only were a boy," she said to herself, "I might do *anything*, for boys find things to do; but girls are shut up in the house to mind their books and to learn to sew and to do woman's work."

Now, Patty was not a vain child, but she was very much stirred by all the excitement of the time, and wanted to exert herself in some direct way to do some deed that should really help her country.

Now, I don't suppose if you could have talked with Patty seriously, that she would have thought that these boys had done a very wonderful or patriotic thing. But the spirit and pluck of it suggested so much; and then the petty and arbitrary action on the part of the enemy, as Patty, with a serious little fierceness, always called every British soldier, suggested so much more.

So absorbed was our Patty in these fancies and dreams, that she scarcely heard a word of her companions' merry talk as they crossed the Common. "What's come over Mistress Patsey?" laughingly asked Ann Loveday, at last, peering down into the dreamy face.

"O Ann, I was thinking. I wished that I — that we girls could do something, — something courageous and fine, as boys can."

Ann laughed, another pleasant, kind laugh, and pinched Patty's plump arm playfully by way of answer. She was used to her friend's dreams and fancies. But Hannah tip-tilted her head, put on a prim, severe, what Patty called her preachy look, and said, —

"The Scripture tells us that 'Envy slayeth the silly one.'"

"It tells us, too, 'Be not wise in your own conceit,'" struck back Patty, quick as a flash.

A dull red mounted to Hannah's face, and an angry look came into her eyes. The other girls tittered, though a little scared that Patty should use Bible texts in this warlike fashion, and against Parson Boylston's daughter, too.

There is no telling how this encounter would have gone on, from bad to worse, if Ann Loveday, sweet peace-making soul, had not here suddenly interposed.

"O Patty," she cried, "come round by Bromfield Lane, it's only a little way farther; I want you to stop a minute at my house; my mother has got a message for you to take to your aunt."

Patty quite understood this gentle device of her friend, and slyly laughed to herself; but she was always glad of an excuse to stop at dear Ann Loveday's, and did not care to go on with Hannah, who she very well knew was slowly, according to her

wont, thinking out some scathing text to overwhelm her. The minute the two turned down Bromfield Lane the laughter broke forth.

"O Ann, such a good truth-telling girl as you, making up such stories of messages!"

"But my mother has always some message to send to your Aunt Keziah," replied Ann, demurely.

Patty laughed again, then suddenly exclaimed, running a step or two ahead, —

"Why, there's my father!"

The tall, stately-looking man walking briskly toward them, his head bent down as if in deep thought, looked up at this, and nodded pleasantly. Ann thought it a good opportunity to proffer a request. Could Patty be allowed to go home with her and take supper at her house?

Mr. Endicott had a great respect for Ann's father and quite approved of Ann, with her quiet, womanly ways, and so after a moment's reflection gave cordial consent.

The two girls were always very happy together, and when they reached Ann's pleasant home, where her mother and little brothers and sisters made such a bright merry household to motherless Patty, who had neither brother nor sister, Patty was in the most joyous humor, quite forgetting, or what was better, quite indifferent to Hannah Boylston's provoking patronage.

All her vain dreams and desires, too, seemed to vanish in the atmosphere of that pleasant home, and the minutes went so swiftly that she could scarcely credit it was seven o'clock when the old English time-piece in the corner struck the hour.

"And am I to go home at eight, when Nathan comes for me?" said Patty, regretfully.

Mrs. Loveday looked up at this from her knitting. "O Patty, I want you to tell your Aunt Keziah that I'm to have the new sleeve-pattern next week from Mistress Philbrook, and that I'll send it to her. It is to be cut bias, tell her, so she will have to buy an extra width of cloth."

Ann laughed merrily. "What did I tell you, Patty, about messages?"

The baby cried just then, and Mrs. Loveday hurried from the room with motherly anxiety. Presently she called Ann to bring her the porringer of milk that set by the fire, and Patty was left to herself and her own thoughts; for Mr. Loveday, who was at the far end of the big apartment, was very busy poring over a large map that lay before him.

Patty stroked the maltese kitten that purred in her lap, and hoped Ann would not be detained long upstairs, for the minutes were flying rapidly, and Nathan would soon be coming for her. Tick-tack! tick-tack! went the old clock pendulum. Patty was

counting it dreamily, when rat-tat-tat! fell sharply upon the door without.

Mr. Loveday left his map and his papers to answer the summons. He also left the sitting-room door a little ajar, and Patty presently heard a mingled hum of two voices, wherein she could discern, "We must go at once! There is n't a minute to be lost! That jackanapes will ruin the whole. But Endicott must be told."

Then followed other words in a lower tone, and then Mr. Loveday came back to the sitting-room, followed by another gentleman in long riding-boots and cloak. Mr. Loveday was evidently much disturbed. He came straight up to Patty, and bent over her with such a grave face that the girl was frightened.

"Oh, what is it? Is my father in danger?" she cried out.

"No, no. What put such a thought in your head, child? It is only that I want you to carry him a message. Nathan comes for you, I believe, at eight; as quickly as you get home, tell your father from me that the *wheelwright* I recommended to him has failed; but if he will see Goodman Brown at the Neck to-night, he may make arrangements for the recovery of some valuable property."

The strange gentleman said something in an undertone, to which Mr. Loveday replied,—

"It's the only way. I can't write it, and I've nobody else to send, or to trust." Then in a louder tone to Patty, —

"My dear, I have heard your father say that you have a wonderful memory, and can repeat long verses with great exactness. Do you think you can take him this message as I have given it?"

Patty, in a docile manner, though a little bashful, repeated the message word for word. Mr. Loveday's face brightened. "That is excellent!" he said. Then, impressively, "Do not repeat it to *any one* except your father, remember."

In another moment he had hurried from the room, and Patty heard him calling up to his wife a hasty good-night and some explanation of his hurried departure.

When, a little later, Patty was going down the garden path with black Nathan, her father's house servant, Mrs. Loveday suddenly called after her, —

"Patty, be sure you don't forget the message I gave you!"

"No, ma'am, I'll not forget."

And then Patty laughed to herself as she thought of the *two* messages that had been intrusted to her. How very funny it was, nobody but herself knew of these *two* messages; for Patty Endicott was an honorable little maiden, and did not betray confidence. Mr. Loveday had told her to repeat his

message to no one but her father, and she had not even hinted what he had told her to Mrs. Loveday or Ann, when they had returned to the sitting-room.

The night was cold and cloudy; it was the last of February, and a snow-storm seemed pending, from the chill in the air. Nathan hurried little missy along as fast as her feet could carry her. They had turned down Bromfield Lane, when a sentry ordered them to halt and give the countersign, for Boston was under strict British military rule.

Nathan was fully prepared, however, as were all the servants of the citizens, and they were passing on, when another voice behind them commanded them to halt. The black man turned briskly, and again repeated the countersign.

But the new-comer laughed. "No, no, this won't do," he said. "I want you and little madam here to come with me."

It was of no use for Nathan to remonstrate. The speaker was armed with military authority, and there was nothing to do but to accompany him.

"Don't you be skeered, missy," said Nathan, in rather trembling tones to Patty.

Patty was looking up just then into the guard's face, which wore a mocking sort of smile; and

he instantly, in a derisive tone, repeated after Nathan, —

“ ‘No, don’t you be skeered, little missy!’ ”

Patty’s spirit rose, and she responded as sharply as she would have answered Hannah Boylston’s patronage, —

“Thank you, I’m not at all ‘skeered,’ sir.”

“You must n’t be sassy to um,” whispered Nathan, in great trepidation.

“You shut up, Cuffee, and let her alone,” said the guard, evidently very much amused at Patty’s spirit.

In a very short time Patty’s spirit was brought to a severer test than this; for she and Nathan were taken before a party of officers, who evidently regarded them as very suspicious personages. The guard went forward at the first, and made some explanation to the officer-in-chief, then retired behind his chair.

There was then a few moments’ consultation with the other officers, and then Nathan was ordered under guard into another room.

“Oh, de lor! my little missy be skeered ’most to deff. Marse Endicott ’ll — ”

“Hush, you foolish lout!” interrupted the colonel. “Nobody’s going to harm your little mistress.”

As the door closed upon Nathan, the colonel

turned toward his small prisoner and smiled. But Patty did not return this smile. She began to feel that something very serious was in process, and though she did not tremble, she had grown very pale, and looked like a snowdrop in her red cloak and hood.

The officer had a little girl of his own, and knew how to approach children. He put out his hand. "Come here, my child," he said pleasantly. "I only want to ask you a question, which you must answer truthfully; and I am sure in this goodly town you have been taught to tell the truth. What was the message you were charged to take home with you to-night?"

The color that had fled from Patty's cheeks returned like a flood-tide. The officers, at this sign of agitation, exchanged glances. For a moment the child was dumb with the sudden pressure of her thoughts. She remembered what Nathan had said, just as they had turned from the Loveday gateway: "Seems if I seed somebody dodgin' dat yer ellum-tree, but I guess 't was a shadder."

Patty knew now that it was no shadow; that somebody had indeed been "dodgin'" round the elm-tree; somebody that the British had set to watch the Loveday Mansion, on suspicion of some Federal plot or plan that had got whispered about.

Coming just too late for Master Loveday and his companion, the spy was just in time to hear Mistress Loveday's emphatic injunction concerning a message, and had at once jumped to the conclusion that he was on the scent of valuable information, and had hence quietly followed and arrested Nathan and his charge.

Patty did not put all these thoughts into words. Like a flash the situation had presented itself to her.

"Come," said the colonel, smiling complacently, "you have only to tell us the message."

Something of Patty's trepidation had now vanished, and in a low but clear voice she distinctly repeated, word for word, Mistress Loveday's message to her Aunt Keziah.

The colonel looked at his officers; his officers looked at him. One of the officers laughed rather jeeringly after a moment.

"Another mare's nest?" he asked.

"Is this all, positively all, of the message? Was there nothing more?" inquired the colonel, sharply. "You must tell us all the truth, or we shall keep you until you do."

Patty had clearly in her mind Master Loveday's message to her father, and she was now quite sure that it was the guarded information in that, that they were in search of; but the colonel had only

asked her for *one* message. Of course, she had a right to infer it was the one that the spying guard had overheard Mistress Loveday allude to, so she answered readily, —

“No, there was no word more.”

They questioned and cross-questioned her, and in this latter they came so close to her secret that Patty trembled in her small shoes, lest some unguarded admission of hers, some slip of the tongue, should disclose the fact that there *was another message*.

When, at the end of it all, the officer, who had jeeringly derided the matter, again spoke in the same tone, the colonel, who in the mean time had been intently studying a slip of paper whereon he had carefully inscribed Mistress Loveday's words, suddenly exclaimed, —

“Not so fast! not so fast! Look here a moment.”

In a far corner of the room the three gentlemen conferred together in undertones. But Patty had the keen ears of childhood, and, added to these, the fine perceptions of a fine intelligence. She could not help catching words and half sentences here and there, such as, “We may be disregarding the most important — Philbrook — a plotting rebel — extra — may mean — men — muskets — bias — across country — instead of straight road.”

Patty grew cold as she heard these words. Perhaps, after all, Mistress Loveday's message might also have some hidden meaning, such as they were seeking. She knew that these were troublous times, when all sorts of ways and means were resorted to to evade the watchfulness of the British.

She was busy with these reflections when she heard an order given in a low tone; then the galloping of a horse's hoofs presently struck her ear. As they died away in the distance the colonel came toward her. His watch was in his hand; he was evidently computing time and distance.

He waited, for what seemed to Patty a long time, just before her, his eyes fixed upon his watch, his mind intent upon his reckoning. At length he took a step forward, and smiling to her, said, —

“Come, little maid, you have been very patient. I hope when you are my guest again it will not be so unwillingly.”

He held the door open for her, called to Nathan, who stood outside, and with what seemed to Patty a half-mocking smile, bowed low to her as she passed over the threshold.

Neither she nor Nathan cared to talk much on their way home. Every shadow suggested a lurking, following spy. When they turned the corner and came in sight of her home, Patty saw her

father standing in the doorway looking anxiously forth into the night. It did not take her many minutes to fly into his arms.

Her sudden, impulsive action and the expression of her face showed him at once that something unusual had occurred, something more than the lagging delay for pleasure at Mistress Loveday's for which he was prepared to rate both delinquents soundly.

Nathan's voluble tongue began at once to tell the story of their detention, and of the manner in which he had been questioned of his master's affairs; his outgoings and incomings, etc. But Patty would say nothing until shut safely within the snug four walls of the sitting-room, alone with her father.

Mr. Endicott was a man of few words, and little given to much demonstration; but as he listened to Patty's story, very simply related, as he received Master Loveday's message from her lips, his eyes kindled, but all the comment he made at that moment was, "You've been a sensible child, Patty; a sensible child." In the next moment he was hurrying forth to obey Master Loveday's directions.

But Patty, though a sensible child, was also a sensitive one; and the excitement she had been through, with its suggestions of danger, made her

sleep that night troubled and broken. British soldiers and British spies, with clanking swords, tramped through her dreams; and when she suddenly awoke in the dead, dark hours, to hear the whistling wind and the driving sleet and snow, she sat up in bed chilled with cold and foreboding fear.

Where was her father? Had he come back safely from his mysterious ride? Had he — Hark! what was that?

She heard a stealthy step upon the stair. It paused at her door, then passed on. It was going straight to her father's room. Perhaps the British were coming to make him a prisoner now!

Without another thought Patty sprang from her bed and flew out into the hall. The stealthy step stopped, and a tall figure turned and confronted her.

"Why, Patty, what does this mean?"

"O father! father! I thought the British soldiers were after you!" and Patty burst into a pitiful, relieved little wail.

Gathering her up in his arms, Mr. Endicott carried the child into his room. As they sat together over the freshly-kindled fire upon the hearth, Patty said, "O father, if I were only a boy to go with you and help you! But girls can do nothing but carry messages and stay at home and cry."

"Patty, I don't know any boy that would have done what you have done. You have given the best of help. The message from Master Loveday that you brought so safely through all that cross-questioning has saved the Federal cause a thousand pounds, and perhaps also a thousand lives. I wouldn't change my little daughter for all the sons in the world!"

Patty sat up and rubbed her eyes. "Why, it's all come true!" she laughed.

"*What* has come true, my dear?"

"Why, my wish that I could do something—something to help, as boys can;" and Patty told the conversation of the afternoon.

Perhaps if Patty had known how her father's friends talked admiringly of her simple courage, it might have made her vain; but she did not know. She did not at that time even ask the meaning of the mysterious message, that had meant so much and had been of so much use. It was enough for her just then that her father would n't change her for all the boys in the world.

But later, when she had grown to be a tall, slim girl and the war was over, she came one day across a record of all this in an old diary, and found that "Wheelright" was the name of a man who had been intrusted with valuable papers, — plans of a projected action, and directions as to the where-

abouts of ammunition, which he was to carry to certain parties in Roxbury. At the same time he had with him harmless papers of a domestic nature, deeds, etc., which he was to leave with Goodman Brown.

The parties at Roxbury receiving the deeds instead of the plans they expected, sent alarmed information to one Captain Carew, who took the same to Master Loveday. Both of these gentlemen were directly under suspicion of violent plotting and planning against the crown, and it was not safe for them, therefore, to venture in the neighborhood of the British at the Neck, on any such errand.

So while they rode in another direction to prepare their friends in case of surprise through this blunder, Master Loveday sent his blind message by Patty to Master Endicott, who, though a patriot, was of a quieter life and character and less suspected by the British. At the end of the entry in the diary concerning this matter Mr. Endicott had written,—

“Goodman Brown gave up the papers to me without demur. He saw at once they were not what he expected; and though he is a timid man and afraid of the British, he was not sorry that I came before them. My little Patty’s good sense, good memory, and obedience, not only averted a

serious catastrophe, but made my mission easier by putting the enemy on the wrong track, which sent him upon a wild-goose chase across the country, when he might have been at my heels."

"And to think I was only a little girl," laughed Patty, as she read this,—"only a little girl."

TIB TYLER.

THE girls were all out on the steps of the Ocean House at Burton Beach, waiting to see Tib Tyler's mother. They were girls whose ages ranged from twelve to fourteen and fifteen,— girls, you understand, not young ladies. Tib herself was thirteen. Her name was Elizabeth, but a little sister had twisted the long name into Libbet and Tibbet, and by and by it had run into "Tib." Tib was a nice girl and a nice-looking girl, a little spoiled, older people used to say, because she got so much attention. This attention came from her mother's many friends and acquaintances. Mrs. Tyler was very popular and very handsome. She was thirty years old, and she *looked* twenty. I suppose thirty years may seem a great age to the twelve-and-thirteen-year-olds who read this. But if you had seen Mrs. Prince Tyler, you would think differently. Tall and slender and graceful, she used to come down the hotel piazza, with a lovely smile on her lips, and people who had n't seen her before would say, "Who *is* that lovely girl?" and

perhaps just then Tib would come flying across the lawn to her, with her long, thin, black-stockinged legs very conspicuous, and her voice raised shrilly as she called "Mamma! Mamma!" and then you should have seen the faces of these questioners. *Such* surprise! "Not the mother of that great girl!" would be the next exclamation. When these people became a little acquainted with Mrs. Tyler they would make the same exclamation sometimes — "Not that great girl your *own* daughter, Mrs. Tyler?" And Mrs. Tyler would laugh, and look down from her lovely height at Tib, and say merrily,—

"Yes, my *own* daughter."

Men, women, and children were attracted to Mrs. Prince Tyler. Her husband's name was Norman Prince Tyler, and Mrs. Tyler's greatest admirers and friends used often to call her the Princess of Normandy.

"Tib's a lucky girl, I think, to have such a mother," said one of the girls who were waiting, the day that I speak of, to see Mrs. Tyler, who was coming back to the beach after a fortnight's visit to Saratoga.

"Lucky,—why?" suddenly asked a new-comer, who had not yet seen the Normandy princess.

For full three seconds Emily Waring, who had just made her emphatic statement of Tib's luck,

stared at little Clarry Evanston before answering; then she broke out still more emphatically,—

“Well, it ’s clear that you are a late arrival, Miss Clarry Evanston, and don’t know about things. Lucky? Would n’t you think it was lucky to be made much of by everybody—to—to have lots of things given to you,—rides, and boxes of candy, oh, and everything, because you had a mother that was—well, like a sort of queen? Now, would n’t you?”

“I—I don’t know.”

“Oh!” cried all at once the whole flock of girls at this.

The color flushed Clarry’s face a deep pink.

“They think I am envious and jealous,” she thought. This thought gave her courage to explain—to say shyly,—

“I—I was thinking I should care—should be so proud of *her*, that I should n’t—should n’t think of the things—the candy.”

Jenny Marshall, a tall girl of fourteen, nodded her head approvingly, and said quickly,—

“Yes, of course,—anybody ’d be proud of her. Oh, she ’s such a darling!” enthusiastically. “She ’s just as sweet to us girls, every one of us, as she is to grown-up people.”

“Well, I could be fond of her and the candy too,” broke in practical Emily, not at all under-

standing Clarry and Jenny's finer sentiment, thinking, indeed, that they were rather putting on airs. It was just at this moment that they heard the roll of carriages and omnibuses coming up the road, or street, and a moment after, with a great clatter, a landau came wheeling round the curve, and they saw a girl's head leaning forward out of the window nodding gayly to them.

They would have cried,—

“How-de-do, Tib?” then and there, if Tib had been alone; but over and above Tib's head beamed the face of the beautiful Normandy princess.

Clarry Evanston drew in a deep breath,—a breath of delighted admiration. So this was Tib's mamma. She stood back a little, and watched the others,—saw the girls flock forward, and two or three gentlemen who were on the piazza jump up and run down the steps,—all, all to speak with, to assist if they could, that charming creature who sat smiling at them from the landau. She gave her bag to one, her umbrella to another, her book and her shawl to this hand and that, outstretched with proffers of service. Then the whole troop followed her in, and one asked for her room-key, and one offered to fetch this, and another to fetch that, fully repaid, it seemed, by the sweet smiles she bestowed, and the word or two of thanks.

That night, after supper, Clarry wrote home to her mother the following letter, which will explain a number of things to the reader :—

DEAR MOTHER, — I received the pretty little jacket and the hat, this morning by express. The jacket is lovely, and so is the hat. Mrs. Needham says it's the prettiest hat here, and when I told her you trimmed it, she could hardly believe it. She says she does n't see how you ever find time to do such work, but I told her you *made* time to do everything for everybody ; and so you do, dear Mammy. Mrs. Needham told me to tell you that I am no trouble at all to her, so you see you need n't worry about that and think you must hurry away for that reason. But I do wish you were here, Mammy ; everything is so lovely ; and oh, Mammy ! there came to-night the sweetest, prettiest lady you ever saw. She has a daughter about my age. They call her Tib, and I think I shall like her very much. I *know* I shall like her mother, — everybody does. Give my love to grandmother, and come as soon as you can to

Your loving daughter,

CLARRY EVANSTON.

It was the next afternoon that Clarry had just left her room and was going down the corridor, when she heard some one call out, —

“ Have you got a button-hook ? ”

She went toward the open doorway from whence the voice proceeded, and saw Tib Tyler with one

boot half on, looking hastily about over the dressing-table for the article she had called for. Tib looked up as she caught sight of Clarry.

"Oh, I thought it was Em Waring; but never mind,—*have* you got a button-hook to lend me?"

Clarry ran back and soon returned with the hook, and in three minutes after, the two girls were in the full swing of girl-chat, getting acquainted famously.

Tib buttoned her boots, and then proceeded to do something that astonished Clarry. This was to sew on to the front of her jacket a fresh set of buttons. The buttons were silk, and it was by no means a task that a girl of thirteen is generally appointed to do.

Tib saw Clarry's look of astonishment, and said: "I'm Jack at all trades. If I had to wait for Félice, I should wait till doomsday."

"Is Félice your nurse?"

"*My nurse!* A great, long-legged thing like me with a nurse! No, she's the maid — Mamma's maid mostly. But ladies have to have many things done for them, don't you know?"

Clarry murmured a feeble assent; but she did n't know anything of the kind. Her experience had n't been wide; it was confined almost entirely to her own mother, who never seemed to have much done for her. But then, a beautiful princess

like Mrs. Tyler,—of course it was different. While she was thinking this, Tib was sewing on her buttons and running on in a ceaseless chatter.

“Your name is n’t only Clarry?—oh, Clarissa! What an old-fashioned name! You were named for your mother, eh? I was named for an aunt. *My* mother’s name is Edith. I call her Edith myself, sometimes. She does n’t mind; she laughs; she likes it. Mamma and I are great chums—like sisters. I’ve got a real sister, though; she’s with the nurse at grandma’s; it costs too much for us all to come here. Is that the reason your mother is n’t here?”

“Oh, no, I don’t think so!” answered Clarry. “My mother went to see my grandmother first, because grandmother is n’t very well, and the two boys, my brothers, are with her. I needed sea air, the doctor said, so mother sent me here in Mrs. Needham’s care.”

“Tib, Tib, Tibby!” called a musical voice, here.

“There’s mamma, now, and Félice is off, I’ll bet a banana. Come with me; we’ll all go down together in a minute.”

So into the presence of the beautiful princess, Clarry was thus summarily taken. The princess smiled in her sweetest manner, and captivated Clarry anew by saying,—

“Oh, I remember this face, and this fluffy yellow

head! She is like our Margie, Tib; I thought so at once when I saw her last night."

Clarry felt as if she had had the greatest of compliments, and looked up in unspeakable adoration into the soft, dark eyes that were smiling down at her.

Tib, in the mean time, was taking Félice's place, doing all sorts of little toilet services in the most matter-of-course way. Clarry looked on in amazement. It seemed almost as if Tib and her mother had changed places in their relationship; Tib being the active little mamma, and Mrs. Tyler the dependent daughter. Clarry herself was not an idle girl at home; she had certain duties assigned to her which she never tried to shirk. But Tib did n't appear to have any special duties; she was, as she had said, "Jack at all trades," and a generally useful person.

But if Clarry was amazed, she was also amused, and specially so when Tib, at the last moment before they left the room, said, —

"Oh, Mamma, don't carry that blue shawl; take the white with gold stripes." Tib, it seemed, had a very clear idea of clothes, not only for herself but for her mother. And what lovely clothes this lovely mamma did wear! And really what lovely clothes everybody wore since the Normandy princess had arrived, to dazzle and suggest with her numerous toilets!

When next Clarry wrote to her mother, there was this little sentence in her letter, —

“The ladies dress so beautifully here. Mrs. Tyler has a wonderful polonaise, like a picture, made out of a brocade worked with pearls that was her great-aunt’s. Couldn’t you get grandmother to let you have that pretty old corn-colored brocade that she used to wear when she was young?”

“What has come over the child?” exclaimed Grandmother Evanston as she read this sentence in Clarry’s letter. “I hope she is n’t getting her head turned with these fine fiddle-faddles, Clarissa.”

“Oh no, my Clarry is too sensible for that.”

“But, Clarissa, if you would like my corn-colored brocade, you are welcome to it.”

Mrs. Evanston laughed. “Oh no, Grandma, it is n’t at all suited to me. Clarry has got a child’s idea of things, and I thought you’d be amused by it, that’s all.”

Mrs. Evanston the elder shook her head. “It looks to me, Clarissa, as if Clarry was getting something more than a child’s idea, — that she was getting the idea of fashion and show.”

“Oh, no, no; I can trust my Clarry.” But still Grandmother Evanston shook her head. This was Tuesday. On Tuesday night Mrs. Evanston wrote

to Clarry that she might expect to see her Wednesday — that she would come in the afternoon train.

When the distant rumble of the carriages and omnibuses reached Clarry's ears at five o'clock the next afternoon, she ran down the steps of the piazza, out upon the verge of the avenue, to catch the first glimpse of her mother, so excited was she. The little knot of girls left on the piazza laughed as her fluff of light hair blew out, and her hat blew off in her speed. First one carriage and then another rolled up and passed Clarry, but her mother was in neither. Oh, what had hindered her? What had happened? But presently the omnibus loomed in sight. Nothing had happened, but that her mother had come up in that, instead of in a carriage. As the driver saw Clarry's eager face, he stopped for her to get in, and for a moment the vague chagrin and disappointment she had felt that her mother had come up in a common omnibus, instead of a fine shining landau, was forgotten in the delight of greeting the dear "mammy."

All the little group of girls were waiting, eager, and curious, as the big lumbering vehicle stopped at the piazza steps.

They saw, not another Normandy princess, but a small, thin little lady, with brown hair turning gray beneath her simple gray straw bonnet. There

was nothing stylish about her, either in her air or her dress. She smiled a little upon the group of girls, but that was all. She did not stop as Mrs. Tyler would have done, with some sweetly-toned remark, or question if these were her Tib's friends, etc.; and the girls, accustomed as they had become to Mrs. Tyler's manner, glanced at each other with vague disappointment.

"Not much like," began Emily Waring a moment later, when a "Hush!" from Tib made her turn to see Clarry coming back for a hand-bag that had been left behind. Of course all the girls' faces wore a look of embarrassment at this crisis, and Clarry saw it and felt it. She had heard, too, unfortunately, that beginning, "Not much like," and divined at once what Emily was preparing to say,—that the new-comer was not much like Mrs. Tyler. At first a feeling of resentment took possession of Clarry's mind. Her dear mammy was better than anybody, and not to be compared to anybody, either. But that night, when she waited while her mother made certain little alterations in her toilet before going down to dinner, she thought "If mother would only crimp her hair and put it up high, she *would* look nicer;" and "nicer" meant just then, with Clarry, more fashionable. But the dear mammy did not crimp her hair, nor put it up high, neither did she wear diamonds nor

grand gowns like Mrs. Tyler and the gay throng of ladies that followed in Mrs. Tyler's train and made such a brilliant show. Her hair rippled softly away from the parting, and was gathered into a great knot at the back, and her gown was a pale gray, made very simply, and trimmed here and there with fine lace. Clarry did not know *how* fine this lace was, then.

As she walked through the big hall and into the dining-room with Clarry's hand in hers, Clarry noticed that one and another glanced up at the gray-clad figure with a look of scrutiny. Were they thinking as Emily Waring was thinking? Were they comparing her — these grown-up people, as Emily Waring had compared her — with Mrs. Tyler?

The days slipped by after this in an odd sort of disjointed fashion with Clarry. She loved the dear mammy. There was nobody like her, of course; but she had entered a new life before her mother arrived, which held her and fascinated her, — a new life where her mother had no part.

"You don't mind, do you, Mother dear, if I wait with the other girls for Tib and her mamma to go into lunch? Tib wants us all at her table this noon;" or, "Mammy dear, Mrs. Tyler asked me if I would drive with her and Tib to-night. Can I?" were some of the propositions that Clarry

seemed constantly putting to her mother, and her mother appeared to be quite willing that Clarry should take her pleasure in her own way, and offered no objection to any of these propositions.

There came at last a great occasion at the hotel, — a concert and grand reception, which were to be followed by a dance for young and old.

“And, oh, Mammy! I do wish you had grandma’s beautiful old brocade,” said Clarry, regretfully, as she stood at her mother’s bureau drawer looking over the laces and gloves.

“But I have something much more suitable for me than grandma’s brocade, dear;” and Mrs. Evanston lifted from her trunk a pearl-gray colored silk, trimmed with white lace.

To Clarry, who had been dazzled for the last few weeks by elaborate combination-gowns of various hues and fabrics gorgeously trimmed and set off by gold cord and fringe and feathers mixed bewilderingly with lace, this soft, modest pearl-gray gown looked old-womanish and old-fashioned, and she gave utterance to something of this feeling to her mother.

Mrs. Evanston smiled a little. “Yes, I know how you feel — how it seems to you now, Clarry; but gay gowns are not suited to me, my dear.”

It was a very pretty scene that greeted the eyes of mother and daughter as they went down into

the hall together that night of the festival. All the rooms were opened as far as the wide doors would admit, and festoons of greenery and flowers and potted plants and bright-colored lanterns gave an enchanted aspect to everything. They were early, and thus had the advantage of seeing the brightly-dressed ladies not only of their hotel, but from the other hotels, come trooping in.

"Oh, it is like fairyland!" whispered Clarry, squeezing her mother's hand as the music struck up, and down the long hall the festoons waved, and the lanterns swung over the heads of the people. The band gave its brilliant little concert, as a sort of overture; then came what the ladies called a reception, where two or three of those who had come to the place the earliest, received the others and welcomed the invited guests from the outside. Mrs. Tyler was the queen of these receiving hostesses; she easily looked the queen in her beautiful white silk dress, set off by Jacqueminot roses, and with diamonds sparkling at her ears and throat. Clarry, more charmed than ever by all this beauty of appearance, hovered about her as a bee hovers about a flower. More than one, observing the two as they stood thus near each other, had remarked not only upon Mrs. Tyler's beauty, but upon Clarry's also. At last Clarry overheard some one say: —



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"She looks much more like her daughter than Tib, and Tib looks much more as if she belonged to that plain little Mrs. Evanston."

Clarry had looked up at this, half pleased, half ashamed and resentful. In a mirror she saw her mother, whom she had strayed away from, standing talking earnestly with a tall, awkward-looking man. Mrs. Evanston had a little defect in her figure, — an unevenness of shoulder, which showed very distinctly when she stood in some positions. It showed distinctly now, as Clarry looked at her, and became for the moment a deformity. Clarry hated herself even then, as she allowed her eyes to stray to another reflection, — that of Mrs. Tyler, tall, straight, and beautiful, whose companion just then was a tall, straight, and handsome man, — an elegant, distinguished-looking man, Clarry thought.

"Of course my mother is the best mother in the world," said the girl to herself, "and I could n't love her any better if she was as beautiful as Mrs. Tyler; but if she would only wear prettier clothes like — like —" and Clarry's eyes wandered to the gay raiment and jewels that shone under the chandelier; and perhaps she said to herself, also, as she looked at her mother's awkward companion, and at Mrs. Tyler's elegant cavalier, "If her friends, too, were only like — like —" It was while she was thinking these very thoughts, half ashamed all

the time, that a gay, light tinkle of girlish voices fell upon her ear, and one of the voices suddenly said, —

“ Oh, here she is ! ”

Clarry turned quickly, and saw the smiling faces of two new acquaintances, — girls she had met in her search after wild flowers during the past week. Clarry was very proud of these new acquaintances, for they were not only, by every external sign, nice, well-bred girls, but they were the daughters of a certain very distinguished literary man.

As she responded to their cordial exclamations, the elder and taller of the two bent forward, after a moment, and whispered, —

“ Introduce us to your mother, do ; she is *too* lovely.”

Clarry was standing at the left, and a little in front of Mrs. Tyler, and caught with these words the double glance that included her with the beautiful woman beside her, — the double glance of admiration that put her for the moment on the same pedestal of distinction and glory.

Her mother ! She looked across at the small, drooping figure in gray, then back at the tall and stately woman whose shining robes almost touched her. She began even then to say, “ This is not — ” when Mrs. Tyler caught her look, — it was a strange, confused look, — and catching at the same

time the admiring faces of the two new-comers, she said to Clarry, —

“What is it, my little girl? Are these some new friends of yours?”

Clarry's heart beat hard and fast. She had called her “my little girl.” Why should she say now, “This is not my mother”? — why should she say anything except to repeat the names of her new friends? It would sound so harsh, so impolite, so forward to make denial or explanation now; she could do that later. So, in the flash of a moment, Clarry argued and acted; and after that moment how strangely changed everything seemed! The band played, the flower-scents came up from the garden, the garlands and flags swung, and people laughed and talked just the same, — just the same, — but nothing seemed the same to Clarry. The flutes and violins, the flying garlands and flags, the very voices of the people appeared to Clarry to carry reproach and accusation. She had denied her mother, — that dear, good, sweet mother, and all for her foolish, foolish vanity. To be sure, it was done tacitly. She had simply allowed her girl acquaintances to be deceived by their own mistake for the time. Anybody might have allowed this, in the haste, the confusion — might have forgotten — might have — But no, no, no; these arguments Clarry very well knew were lies,

every one. Though swiftly, she had done the thing deliberately; there was no haste, no confusion, no forgetfulness. She had been ashamed of her mother almost from the first, since she had seen her beside these gay and fashionable people, this beautiful Mrs. Tyler. As she thought this, Mrs. Tyler's sweet voice was saying to the two young girls whose names had been repeated to her, —

“And your father is here; ah, my dears, I have always wanted to know your father. Where is he? Bring him to me — but no, take me to him.”

The tallest of the girls turned and looked about her for a moment, then exclaimed, —

“Oh, there he is, talking to that lady in gray.”

Clarry followed the direction of the speaker's eyes. Could it be that “the lady in gray” she spoke of was her own mother? Could it be that that tall, awkward-looking man was the distinguished scholar and poet she had heard so much about? Could it be? Yes, for the next moment there he was, returning the little familiar smile and nod of his daughter, and in another moment Clarry felt herself swept forward in the train of Mrs. Tyler. For a second she had held back, had tried to drop behind the rest and escape, for, oh, how could she face her new friends with her little acted lie striking back upon her so suddenly! But Mrs. Tyler's hand was upon her

shoulder, in a light but firm pressure, and there was no escape for her then. She heard, as in a bad dream, the daughter's voice presenting Mrs. Tyler as Mrs. Evanston, Clarry Evanston's mother, as she supposed; then she heard a light ripple of laughter, and Mrs. Tyler herself contradicting the mistake, and then her own mother's, Mrs. Evanston's, sweet voice saying softly, —

"Ah, here is my daughter! I thought you had forsaken me, Clarry."

Forsaken her! The playful words struck Clarry like a knife.

The next instant the "tall awkward-looking man" was holding Clarry's hand as her mother said, —

"This is my daughter." Clarry's eyes fell; when she raised them, she met the searching, surprised gaze of her new girl-acquaintance. As the older people began talking, leaving the younger people to themselves, this girl said suddenly to Clarry, —

"I thought that was your mother," indicating Mrs. Tyler.

"No — no!" faltered Clarry.

"But you introduced her as your mother."

"I did not contradict you, that was all. I — I —"

A look of distress came into Clarry's face, her eyes filled, her mouth began to twitch.

"Come into the garden," cried her companion, in a low voice; "you mustn't cry here." And seizing her by the hand, she slipped away with her, unnoticed by the rest of the party. The tears and sobs were coming thick and fast as they neared the little summer-house at the foot of the garden.

Clarry never knew how it came about; how she ever had the trust or the courage to do what she did,—to tell of all her foolish vanity, her meanness and wickedness, to this new girl-acquaintance that she had been so proud to know. But she seemed urged on by a desire in some way to expiate her offence, to humiliate herself in the very quarter where she had erred. Of course this beautiful Esther Meredith would despise her, would turn away from her, when she found how unworthy she was; but that too was part of her expiation, of her punishment, and she went on to the bitter end. But what was that she heard at the end? Was Esther—this tall, dignified, severe-looking Esther—crying too? Her own tears ceased to flow in her surprise. "What is it? Why are *you* crying, Esther?" she asked.

"Because I am so sorry for you—because I pity you so."

"Oh, Esther! you don't hate me and despise me?"

"No, I don't hate and despise you, because you

hate and despise yourself for what you have done. If you did n't I — should n't be sorry for you; I should n't care for you."

"Oh, Esther! you care for me — *now?*"

Esther bent down and silently kissed the face upturned to hers. For a few minutes the girls sat hand in hand without speaking; then Clarry said, "If I could tell my mother and she should understand as you do, and forgive me, I should feel as if I had dropped a great load."

Then Esther lifted up her sweet, severe young face.

"Of course, your mother would forgive you; but, Clarry, I think it is mean to pack off our hurts like that upon somebody else. I think that it is part of the whipping that we must take, part of the penalty that we must pay for wrong-doing, sometimes *not* to drop our load on another's shoulders, but to bear it ourselves, and say nothing. I don't think you have any right to hurt your mother by telling her this."

"And it is n't deceitful *not* to tell?"

"No; it is n't deceitful to hold back from hurting a person needlessly."

"But when mamma speaks to me, and trusts me just the same without a suspicion that I have been so — so mean, oh! what *shall* I do, Esther?"

"Bear it, and *try* to deserve it; that is part of

your penalty," Esther's proud sixteen-year-old young voice cried.

"Clarry! Clarry! where are you?—they want you."

It was Tib's high, shrill tones that called. "Oh, here you are in this poky little mosquito-box. Come into the house, do; we're going to dance."

"But where have you been all the evening before this, Tib?" asked Clarry.

"With Félice. Félice has one of her sick headaches. Somebody has to be with her, so I stayed; mamma could n't; but good-by. I'll tell your mother you are coming. She is waiting for me to find you. She did n't want you to lose the first dance."

Both Clarry and Esther thought the same thoughts as they followed Tib; but Esther only said, "So *that* is Mrs. Tyler's daughter! She seems like a little mother instead of a daughter."

When the girls came into the bright light of the parlor, the sets for the Lancers were forming. Mrs. Tyler stood at the head, radiant and youthful-looking. Esther and Clarry waited for a moment on the threshold to look at her. As they stood thus, the sweetest voice that Clarry had ever heard, said just behind them,—

"I am so glad you have come back! I did n't want you to miss the dance."

Clarry turned. "But where are you going, Mamma?"

"I'm going up to sit with poor Félice, who is ill. Tib has just left her, and I told her that she need n't go back again."

When Mrs. Evanston passed out of hearing, Esther Meredith, with a laughing light in her eyes, said half mockingly, but with an undercurrent of earnestness, —

"If one could have two mothers, I might choose a society queen for one of them — like Mrs. Tyler; but for the *one* mother, I should choose Mrs. Evanston." Then, with great energy, — "She's a darling, Clarry, and look out that you deserve her. But oh! listen to that lovely music — tum, tum, ti tum!" — and Esther flung her arm around Clarry and waltzed her down the room; and Clarry, as she kept time and step, seemed to hear in the sweet notes of the flutes and fiddles, Esther's tender admonition, —

"Look out that you deserve her!"

CON OWEN'S BLUNDER.

I.

“O F course Con's essay will win; it always does.”

“I don't see why; I'm sure yours is lovely, just lovely, Em,—all that pretty description, and that sweet way you have of winding up.”

Emily Irving gave a sudden little twist, a sort of impatient shake of protest.

“Oh, don't, Kit! *That* is n't the thing that wins; that is n't strength. I can always slop and gush, I know that very well; and I *did* hope I had n't, here in this essay. I hoped there was something to overtop that; but it seems there is n't, for the first thing that strikes you is just this gush.”

Kind Kitty Preston looked very much taken aback, and for the moment was silenced; but she found her wits and tongue presently, and endeavored to make amends for her blunder by saying in a most cheerful tone of voice,—

“Oh, well, Em, you must n't take my judgment for much. They always say at home that I never understand anything deep; and to tell you the



"Jenny curled herself up on the bed." — *Page 227.*

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truth I could n't understand a word of the heavy part of your essay, the — deep part — not a word."

To the astonishment of Kitty, Emily Irving flung herself back upon the pillows of the lounge and shouted with laughter; and after a second, Miss Kitty herself joined in the laughter.

"You are the very funniest girl, Kit!" cried Emily when she could speak, — "the very funniest girl; and the best of it is, you have no idea how funny you are." And again Emily laughed, and again Kitty joined in the laughter.

"What in the world's going on? What's the fun?" a voice suddenly inquired outside the door.

"It's Jenny Miles," said Emily, turning to Kitty; the next moment she cried out, —

"Come in, Jenny; Kit Preston's the fun."

"Of course; I might have known it. What's it all about?" And Jenny curled herself up on the bed, which was really the only place in the room that was not piled with books or clothing, and prepared to listen. Emily was a very good story-teller, a very good mimic, and she soon had Jenny Miles joining in a fresh peal of laughter.

Quieting down at last, Jenny took up the first cause of this laughter, and declared that she was entirely of Kitty's opinion in regard to the essay.

"But you have n't read it, or heard it read," exclaimed Emily.

"No, not this particular one; but I've heard others of yours, and I like your style."

"Oh, I know, — you like just that gush of mine."

Jenny giggled. "Well you can call it that if you like, but I sha' n't tell you my judgment is n't worth much, for I think it's worth a good deal."

Emily smiled, but rather faintly; her mind was now fully occupied with her misgivings concerning the essay.

"There is n't so much of what you call my 'style' in this, however," she explained. "I tried to — to make it more solid, more like Con's."

"Well, now, I would n't have done that. I'd stick to myself, anyhow. But let's hear it. Come, read it out."

"Oh, you don't want to hear it."

"Yes, I do; come."

"But Kitty does n't want to hear it again."

"Yes, she does, too. Maybe she'll get to understanding the deep part a little when she hears it again;" and Jenny gave another giggle. "You do want to hear it again, don't you, Kit?"

"Yes, of course."

Kitty was so kind-natured that she would have said, "Yes, of course," if it had been the tenth time instead of the second that she had been called upon to listen.

The subject of the essay was "The Women of

the French Revolution." The principal herself — Mrs. Callender — had given this subject to the class. It was the first class in literature and history, and numbered about fifteen girls, each one of whom was bound by her honor to prepare her essay not only unaided by any of her companions, but without revealing any portion of her plan or method. Some of the girls enjoyed this manner of working very much; others disliked and abused it roundly: of the latter was Emily Irving.

"If each could choose her own subject, as is done at other schools, or if Mrs. Callender would give each one a different subject, there would be some fairness in the thing," she had complained to Constance Owen at the beginning.

"Why, I like this way; I think it's great fun," Constance returned.

"Oh yes, *you* can like it; it may be fun for you, for you never have any difficulty in making a composition interesting. *You* can write on *anything*."

"No indeed, I can't, Em. I can't begin to write such descriptions of places and people and things as you can."

"Oh, bother my descriptions! Mrs. Callender has told me lots of times that I use too many adjectives."

"But you've corrected that fault."

"Ye—s, perhaps so; but even if I have, what are descriptions merely, to such meat as you can give?"

"You always think that what somebody else possesses is better than your own possessions, Em; that's what's the trouble."

"Well, you can't call me conceited, then, can you?" laughed Emily.

"No; but one might call you envious," replied Constance.

A hot red flush mounted to Emily's forehead.

"I'm sorry you think I am envious of you, Constance," she said, turning away stiffly.

But Constance ran after her. "Oh, Emmy, I did n't mean—I did n't mean to say that you were envious of *me*, of anybody particularly; I only meant—"

"You only meant I was envious, generally—of everybody!" Emily's voice quivered not with sorrow but anger,—the anger of hurt vanity; and Constance, hearing it, and seeing her quick hurried movement, did not attempt to follow her farther. This all happened at the beginning of the month, just after the giving out of the subject of the essay; ever since that time there had been a coldness between the two, who had been such excellent friends before. The whole school of twenty-five girls, from the lowest to the highest classes, knew all about it; that is, they knew what Emily had told *in confi-*

dence to several of her friends, and this was, that Constance Owen had said she was envious of everybody. This is the way that stories gather and grow as they pass from one to another, — for when one tells something in confidence to Kitty and Alice and Jenny, it is no longer a secret, and very soon filters through the little buzz of the chattering tongues to the rest of the world. Neither Emily nor Constance knew at the time that their world was so interested in comparing notes about them, — that twenty-three tongues were daily wagging about their “quarrel,” as the little difference was called. Emily knew that her friends Kitty Preston, Jenny Miles, and Elly Brown sympathized with her, and thought that Con Owen was hard upon her, that she had thoroughly misunderstood her; but she had no idea then that two distinct parties had been formed, one for and one against her. And Con Owen had not only no idea of this, she had no idea even of the select trio of Emily’s sympathizers; for Con was one of those girls, unlike Emily, who kept things to herself, and would no more have thought of talking about the little difference between them, than — well, than Emily would have thought of keeping silent. But one day, in the thick of all this chattering, Emily had an unseen auditor that she would scarcely have chosen.

II.

MRS. CALLENDER'S school was not originally a boarding school. It had started as a day school merely, for the children in and about Mertonville. It had, however, become so popular that gradually she had yielded to the solicitations of her Boston friends and turned it into a boarding school for those who were at an inconvenient distance to come and go in a day. The result was that she had been obliged to add an "L" here, and a "T" there, as the girls facetiously abbreviated the tall tower that ran up on the west side.

It was in one of these tower rooms that Emily's unseen auditor happened to be studying that day. Emily's room was in the old part three or four steps below the tower hall, and directly opposite the lower tower room. The breadth of the passage was not great, and when, as it happened on this day, both transoms were open, the conversation in the lower room floated up and into the higher, as if a mischievous wind had blown it thither. The one occupant of the tower room on this occasion was a transient visitor only, who had been given permission to use the room for study in the absence of the permanent occupant. She had

paid no heed to the sound of voices, until that sentence, "Of course Con's essay will win; it always does," caught her attention. After this it was impossible to fix her mind upon her own study. And why should she not form one of the audience, though uninvited and unseen, when the essay was read? After that, if she also listened to the swift word and comment that came, it certainly was not ordinary eavesdropping, nor for any mischievous purpose.

"It's a lovely essay, — lovely!" declared Jenny Miles. "I like the descriptions best; but the solid part, where you compare the characters of Madame Roland and Marie Antoinette, I like too; it sounds so dignified and intellectual."

"Does it really?"

"Yes, really; why, it's just as good as, if not better than anything of Con Owen's in that line."

"Oh, now you're flattering me."

"No, I'm not," stoutly; "but, as I said in the beginning, I'd stick to myself and my line, and your line is the descriptive and picturesque and not the analytical! There, now, what do you think of that for criticism? Isn't that worthy of Professor Hall?" And Jenny straightened herself up, and put on a lofty look in mimicry of the Professor. Her companions laughed; but Emily's laugh exhaled in a sigh.

"Come, now, don't do that, Em," cried Jenny.

"You've nothing to sigh for; and I'll bet—I'll bet a tennis-set that you'll get the first prize."

"Never!" and Emily sprang up and began to walk up and down the floor.

"Now, Em—" began Jenny; but Emily interrupted her,—

"No, I shall never get the first prize while Con Owen is here,—never. Mrs. Callender underrates my descriptive power, as you call it; and — and —" She was going to say "overrates" Con Owen's style; but she changed the words to, "gives all her admiration to the analytical style."

Jenny and Kitty protested and praised and argued, but Emily only responded,—

"It's of no use; I know I'm right, and, understand, I'm not blaming Mrs. Callender; I don't wonder she feels as she does. I'm sure I think Con's essays are much superior to mine, and it is n't envy either."

"Envy! Well, I guess *not!*" exclaimed Kitty, warmly. "It's real generous appreciation. How Con could call such appreciation 'envy' is beyond my comprehension."

The solitary girl in the tower room gave a sudden start. At first an expression of astonishment, of indignation, appeared upon her face; then gradually this faded into a thoughtful questioning look, as if the mind was considering some hitherto un-

considered possibility. And that was just the case. The possibility grew and grew as the talk in the next room went on.

"Yes, Mrs. Callender certainly thinks a great deal more of the analytical than the picturesque and descriptive. I think she overrates it, and that's Con's strong point, and she makes the most of it. Now, you don't make the most of your strong point. You try to — to cultivate what is n't so strong, and I say that's modest and laudable."

"Oh, Jenny, a few minutes ago you were advising me to stick to myself."

"Well, I don't advise you *not* to do that, now; you can stick to yourself, — the best of yourself, — and try to improve, of course, where you are not at your best, can't you?"

A bell came suddenly ringing in on this talk.

"My goodness, there's my practice hour!" And Jenny sprang from the bed, scattering in all directions the pile of books upon the floor as she did so, and went scampering down the hall. The solitary girl in the tower room sprang up also, but it was not to leave the room; it was to go to a little desk in the corner, to unlock it, and take out a neat manuscript of rather bulky proportions. This she turned over leaf by leaf, and at the last leaf she drew a deep sigh, nodded her head once, twice, thrice, and at the thrice, said softly, "Yes, I'll do it."

III.

MRS. CALLENDER and her staff of teachers drew back with an air of satisfaction and relief as Constance Owen ascended the platform to read her essay. They had just listened to five compositions of the most commonplace character, and Mrs. Callender's expressive face had begun to show symptoms of weariness, when Miss Owen's name was called. "Now," thought Mrs. Callender, "we shall have something that is not merely correct English, but interesting and original." The four teachers also settled themselves into comfortable attitudes with pleasant anticipations. In this hospitable atmosphere Constance began to read. Unlike herself on previous occasions, her manner was nervous and her voice monotonous. "Perhaps that is the reason," thinks Mrs. Callender at first, "that the essay seems so unlike Con's usual efforts; she will warm up presently, no doubt." But the minutes go; and though the manner loses it nervousness and the voice its monotony, the essay does not gain upon the listeners. It is not like Con's usual fine earnestness, full of natural dramatic fire and interest. It is labored and somehow unnatural and out of her line, though it does not

lack a certain grace of language. "But what is Con doing with these flights of fancy and description? Why has she left her own rightful domain of character sketching to plunge into these mazes of scene-painting? All very well to try her hand in a new direction at some other time; but *now*, what possessed her?" think Mrs. Callender and the four teachers and the four-and-twenty-girls who sit there listening; for this is the crucial hour, — the hour when the four teachers and the four-and-twenty girls are invited to listen with critical ears that they may give in their votes for the essay that is to be read at the next day's exhibition, the prize essay, as it is called.

Constance's face was very pale when she read the concluding words; but Mrs. Callender, who at any other time would have taken note of this pallor and had some kind inquiry to make, seemed now perfectly oblivious to everything but her own disappointment, and with a slightly impatient manner she turned and called out, "Miss Emily Irving."

Emily came forward with a bright eagerness which was in strong contrast to Constance. With a full ringing voice she began to read. She had endeavored, as she said, to be a little more solid than usual, but she had not like Constance thrown over her special power; and as with the most animated interest she went on from point to point of

her composition, the light, bright touches of description seemed by comparison so spontaneous, though a little too flowery, that everybody felt it a welcome relief; and when the votes were taken, nobody was surprised that there was an overwhelming majority for Miss Irving.

"Well, what did I tell you, Em?" was Jenny Miles's triumphant inquiry when the session was over.

"Yes, I know your prophecy has come true; but it would n't if Con had done her best."

"Oh, bother about her best! Do appreciate what you've won!"

Emily laughed. "I'll try to." She tried so well, that presently, what with the flattery of her friends and her own self-congratulation, she began to lose sight of the fact of the strangeness of Con's suddenly indifferent work, and by and by to think with Jenny Miles that they had overestimated her, and that the essay was the result simply of Con's limit.

On exhibition day the congratulations that poured in on Emily quite turned her head. How she had underrated herself! Of course Con had not written in her usual style, but that had only proved that Mrs. Callender and those who followed Mrs. Callender had simply had a hobby for "mere characterization," — that was what Jenny Miles called it.

There was a week's vacation following the exhi-

bition, and Emily went home with her triumph, in "high feather." Jenny and Kitty, whose homes were in the same town, about twenty miles from Mertonville, began to get a little tired of the one subject before the twenty miles' journey was over. When, in the week's vacation, they were again and again reminded of the same subject, Jenny's patience gave out.

"I *do* wish Em *would* stop talking about her success! I don't think it's very modest," she at last burst out to Kitty.

"It was so unexpected; I suppose that is why she can't get over it," replied gentle, conciliatory Kitty.

"Well, she might stop talking about it; and, Kit, she does give herself such airs — so patronizing! I used to think she was so modest; she never cried herself up, but always down."

"Yes, but that was talking about herself," Kitty suddenly exclaimed, as if she had been startled into speaking, by a sudden thought.

Jenny laughed. "Oh, Kit, how you do hit the nail on the head once in a while,—just a sharp square blow with your little hammer!"

"Oh, but, Jenny, I didn't mean to be sharp, I —"

"It's of no use, Kit; you've driven the truth home. She did talk about herself when she cried herself down, and we were always boosting her up to make

her feel better. The amount of praise she got out of us,—just think of it! Oh, Kit, don't you feel like the little girl when she first found out that her doll was made of sawdust?"

When school began again, Jenny and Kitty rather expected that Emily would be, as they said, more like herself,—that is, the self they had known. But though she had ceased talking about her triumph—to them, at least; she seemed somehow changed. Perhaps her charm to them, had been that she was always decrying herself; they had thought it modesty then. Now she no longer decried herself, but went about with a little independent, self-assured air that exasperated Jenny. One day Alice Clark, a keen-witted girl, voiced Jenny's feeling by saying suddenly, as Emily went down the hall with her head in the air and her tongue running volubly to her companion,—

"Accidental success is demoralizing."

As the days went on and classes were being arranged and rearranged, nothing seemed, as Jenny said, like old times.

"We shall get shaken down by and by," hopeful Kitty prophesied. "Things are always at sixes and sevens when we first come back."

But the shaking down didn't appear to come. Things remained at sixes and sevens. And why? Nobody could tell exactly why. Emily Irving had,

it is true, been putting on airs ; but Emily Irving was not of such very great importance, surely.

There seemed to be a ripple of disturbance everywhere. Even Con Owen, who was usually so independent of all the little jars and frets, was unlike herself, with an odd, uncertain fitfulness of mood that nobody had ever seen in her before. Little partisan cliques had arisen in the school. From each little clique arose hints of gossip, of personal fault-finding and criticism of the other. By and by Mrs. Callender became conscious of all this. Nothing ever escaped Mrs. Callender long. She was like a girl herself, almost, — bright and swift and spirited.

"What in the world is the matter with all the girls this term, can *you* tell me?" she suddenly asked Jenny Miles one day.

"So *you* have noticed how at sixes and sevens things are, Mrs. Callender?"

"I have felt that things were not moving as happily and smoothly as in other terms. What is it?"

"I'm sure *I* don't know, Mrs. Callender. At first I thought it was only Emily Irving and I who had got at sixes and sevens."

"Emily Irving and you! What has put you two at sixes and sevens?"

Jenny explained in her graphic manner, leaving out nothing, and winding up with, —

"Emily has been so patronizing ever since, that even Alice Clark made the remark that accidental success was demoralizing."

Mrs. Callender lifted up her head with a sudden thought.

"Jenny, has there been any ill-feeling between Emily and Constance?"

"No, not a bit, that I could see. Emily has been patronizing to Constance as to everybody else, and I don't suppose Con has liked it very well; but she has been polite and kind to her, and Con was one of the first to offer Em congratulations, you know."

"Yes, I know. Well, we shall see what time will bring forth; perhaps it's all in the air, — electrical disturbance, — and a little earthquake will set us right by and by," Mrs. Callendar replied smilingly.

A little earthquake! People sometimes make a prophecy unthinkingly.

IV.

"ATTENTION, young ladies!" Mrs. Callender had touched the little electric bell without effect. Her clear voice rising a trifle impatiently succeeded in bringing all eyes toward her and silencing every murmur.

She waited until the silence was a profound stillness ; then, touching the bell again, she nodded to the girl who stood waiting upon the platform. It was a signal for her to begin reading the composition she held in her hand, for it was composition day, — the first since the term had opened. There were no prizes of promotion, or special encomium by vote, connected with these essays, they were simply the class compositions of the month ; but as usual, Mrs. Callender had given out the subject. This time it was an American subject, not a foreign one, — “Colonial Boston just before the War for Independence.” The youngest girls always read their compositions first, the others following in regular order of age. Con Owen and Emily Irving brought up the rear, because they were the two eldest. During the neat, sometimes amusing, but not particularly clever sketches that preceded the “rear guard,” as the girls had dubbed Con and Emily, Jenny and Kitty were waiting with eager curiosity for this rear guard to come forward. Would Con keep up that folly of hers, trying a new style that did n’t belong to her, — “going back on herself,” Jenny called it. Would Emily — But in the thick of all this wondering the little bell strikes its sharp, quick summons, and Miss Thornton, the class teacher, calls, —

“Miss Owen.”

Mrs. Callender is as impulsive as a girl, and she shows very clearly as she lifts her head with a sudden alert movement, and sits up smartly in her chair, that she is to the full as curiously expectant as Jenny herself.

There is no nervousness about Con this time. So far it is the old Con, composed, and apparently easy in her mind. She begins to read. With a few broad, bold touches, as we say of painters, she describes Boston in the year before the Revolution; but her description is not an elaboration of details either of places or persons. She manages to make the time live again by dramatic presentation of the people of that day in their relation to the coming war. All the famous folk that had to do with the approaching struggle in England, from King George down, were made to figure in a dramatic way that brought the period before the listeners with great distinctness and effect.

Applause was not allowed. If it had been, the whole school would have broken out in vociferous expression. As it was, the exchange of glances very eloquently bespoke the general satisfaction.

Mrs. Callender leaned back with a look of relief. Con was herself again. She had not weakly tried to imitate somebody else. Now for Emily. Emily had ample opportunity to do her best with the picturesque subject. As Con had portrayed the spirit

of the time, with her dramatic analyzation of character, so could Emily picture in detail the external accompaniments which meant so much, — the appearance of the Province House, the difference in the dress of the high and low, the outward symbols and ceremonies and manners and customs. Emily, too, would certainly be at her best now. The little bell sent forth its sharp signal again, the class teacher nodded, and Emily Irving came forward.

The first few sentences promised well. The ruffles and gold lace and red broadcloth, the ceremonies and customs bade fair to be set forth with proper and graceful effect. Mrs. Callender began to draw another breath of relief, when suddenly the words came crowding in with rather too much speed, and presently gay adjectives hurried after each other with such swiftness that the ear began to get confused, and the eye that was endeavoring to picture the Colonial gentleman saw such a mixture of "superbly-fitting silk stockings," and "gorgeously shining and resplendent shoe-buckles," and "dazzlingly beautiful scarlet cloth," with "exquisitely embroidered snowy ruffles," that stockings and shoe-buckles and lace and cloth got inextricably mixed.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" sighed Mrs. Callender softly to herself; and, "My goodness!" whispered

Jenny to Kitty, "if Em has n't put on all her old frills and flummery!"

But Em had not been content with this; she had a mistaken idea that she had made a hit in her exhibition essay by her little attempt at argument and analysis, and was determined to try her hand in this line again at the very next opportunity. As Mrs. Callender listened to the labored and ponderous sentences that endeavored after the first flowery descriptions of scenes and people to describe character and motives, her impulsive nature got the better of her, and an ominous frown brought her brows together in two funny puckers that every girl fully understood. If Em herself had been looking that way, she, too, would have understood; but Em — misguided creature, mistaken to the very last — went airily on to the end; and at the end only, she saw Mrs. Callender's face, and *felt* the silence that did *not* mean restrained applause. In a few minutes there was a little hubbub of talk as the girls passed out at the close of the session.

"All her old faults exaggerated." "Trying to outdo Con on her own ground." "Should have thought Con's splendid essay would have opened her eyes to begin with." These were some of the remarks that ran from lip to lip. Then arose an opposing clamor, and Emily was defended by another set of girls, — a younger set, that had followed her

about latterly. "Em's essay was splendid in itself." "The rest of the girls were jealous for Con, but Con did n't get the exhibition essay, did she?"

"No, she did n't," suddenly cried a clear voice full of impatient indignation, "and you little know why." This speaker was Alice Clark. Mrs. Callender, as it happened, was herself coming out into the corridor just as these two angry voices were speaking. She stopped at once, looking from one to the other. For a moment a hush that was breathless fell upon the girls. Then Mrs. Callender came forward and put her hand over Alice's arm with the words, —

"Come, Alice, come into the library with me ; I want to ask you a question."

As the two turned away together the girls looked at each other in dismay. They felt that something very serious was coming ; what, they did not know.

In the library Mrs. Callender was saying, —

"Now, Alice, what did you mean by your reply just now ? What is the mystery about the exhibition essay, — for there *is* a mystery ? You implied that there was another reason than we knew, for Con's failure last term."

Alice did n't answer ; instead, the tears came into her eyes.

"My dear, I don't want to urge you to speak if you think you ought not ; is that it ? "

Alice bowed her head.

"You have made a promise?"

"Yes, Mrs. Callender."

"To Con, I suppose?"

Alice was silent, but her face flushed fiery red.

Mrs. Callender rang the bell. She told the servant who answered it to send Miss Owen to her.

"Oh, Mrs. Callender!" began Alice, reproachfully.

"Can't you trust me, Alice?" said Mrs. Callender in her softest voice, and smiling upon Alice in her gentlest way. The girl could not help smiling in response, and if she still felt a little trepidation, it was soon quieted, when in a few moments Mrs. Callender was simply relating to Con what had just transpired. "And now, Constance," she concluded, "I want you to explain what Alice's words meant. I am confident there is something I ought to know. Alice in her indignation at the taunt concerning your failure, told the truth, I am certain, when she said we little knew why. I have always felt there was something strange in that failure. I don't mean the mere failure to get the first place, but the failure to produce an interesting essay. It was like nothing you had ever done; it was like somebody else. Now tell me about it, — what it meant, Constance."

And Constance told. She related the conversation she had had with Emily when Emily had been

offended at her plain speaking; "but I did n't have an idea," she went on, "that it had made such an impression upon her until the week before exhibition day. I was in Mary Ingalls's room one day, — the tower room; Miss Thornton had given me permission to study there while Mary was absent, — and that morning while I was at work I overheard voices in the room just across the passage. I did n't think of paying any attention until I heard Emily say, 'Of course Con's essay will win; it always does.'" Constance paused here as if considering.

"Go on; tell me all that you heard; leave out nothing," Mrs. Callender said quickly. And thus commanded, Constance related the whole conversation as she had overheard it.

Mrs. Callender gave a little impatient ejaculation at the end; then, — "Well, go on," she said again. And Constance went on to describe the effect that this conversation had had upon her. "I looked back and saw," she proceeded in a low voice, "that Emily had cause perhaps to feel — discouraged. Then I thought that it would be but fair for me to write another essay, and not take advantage of — of — my strong point; to write one more in Emily's vein, and take my chance with her."

"And you carried this plan out forthwith? What did you do with the first, — the *true* essay?"

"I put it away, — locked it up in my desk."

Mrs. Callender flung her head back against the high chair she sat in, with a half-comic, a half-despairing gesture. For a moment she was silent; then straightening herself up, she astonished Alice and Constance by saying in that swift, impetuous *young* way of hers, —

"You did evil that good might come of it. You told a lie, in fact."

"Oh, Mrs. Callender, Mrs. Callender, how can you say that, when Con was so generous?" Alice burst forth indignantly.

Con herself was white and trembling, but she put out her hand towards her friend with a "Hush, Alice!"

Mrs. Callender was looking at Con, not with accusing but loving eyes.

"Oh, Con, Con!" she exclaimed, perfectly heedless of Alice and her indignation, "I did think that you might be trusted to be simple and straightforward! You owed me your best work; you withheld it, and gave me inferior work as the best you had to offer. Was that a lie or not, Con? You did it to give Emily a chance, you say. The chance you gave her was to contrast her best work with your worst. The result was demoralizing. At once she thought you had hitherto been overrated and herself underrated; that she also had under-

rated herself ; and she loses all judgment and goes back to her old faults and exaggerates them ; and this makes her exaggerate a good many other things, and puts her into false relations with the rest of the girls. And you, you yourself, Con, were not satisfied with your deception. You have tried to be equal to your mistaken generosity ; but you have felt irritated, and the irritation has expressed itself in various moody ways that have affected others. Oh, my dear, don't you see that the simple way of truth is the only way, and that one single manœuvre out of that direct road runs the whole train off the track, — don't you see ?”

“ Yes, I see ; and, Mrs. Callender, I began to see it almost as quickly as I had committed myself by reading that dreadful essay. I thought at first that I was doing a very fine thing, and I felt very proud of myself ; then I began to feel uncomfortable and embarrassed at the things that were said — that were asked me ; and Emily made it harder, she — she put on such airs. Oh, it *was* a lie, and I wish, — how I wish I could wipe it all out. Is n't there some way ?”

“ I confess, my dear, that I don't see the way. I don't think we have any right to inform the school, or to tell Emily that you gave her her chance in this way. You have placed her in the position that you have. You can't displace her without

cruel mortification to her and seeming triumph to yourself, the results of which would be more injurious than the present state of things. I know that to leave matters as they are is not satisfactory to you; you feel that confession would restore your self-respect. But one must forego that relief sometimes when another is to be sacrificed by it. We have to pay for our mistakes now and then by bearing the burden of them in silence; and I think that is what you have got to do, — what *we* have got to do."

In the flash of a moment Constance understood all that this meant. "What *we* have got to do." It was not only that she must bear the burden herself, but Mrs. Callender must bear it also; must go back to the slow task of adjusting and correcting faults that had suddenly taken fresh root and growth. "What *we* have got to do."

"Oh, Mrs. Callender, what a muddle I've made!"

Mrs. Callender smiled that enchanting smile of hers. "My dear, when I make my next big blunder I shall come to you to help me bear it."

As she spoke she put out a hand to each of the girls.

"Come," she said, "don't let us take matters too solemnly. We are three comrades, you know, and must bear one another's burdens and keep the secret of it, and — But hark, there's the luncheon

bell, and you must run ; but remember what I've said."

They were in no danger of forgetting. "Three comrades !" Both Con and Alice felt a sweet sense of help and comfort as they went down the corridor. The miserable little irritations of the past month were suddenly pierced through by a rift of sunshine which lighted up the way. To Con it now seemed possible to bear with grace and courage and silence whatever might come. It was the price she owed, the payment to be paid for her blunder.

DOLLY'S CHRISTMAS KETTLEDRUM.

AT the end of the great hall in Mrs. Portman's house there was one large window with a deep window-seat, which was a favorite gathering-place for all the girls on that floor. Mrs. Portman, ten years before this story opens, had been a great leader of society, — not fashionable society merely, — and losing the fortune that had enabled her to take such a position, by one of the disastrous financial crises that ruined so many people, she had at once gone to work and established a private day and boarding school for young ladies in her out-of-town mansion. So popular had this school become that some one who had vainly waited and tried to find a vacancy one autumn, made this rather spiteful remark concerning it: "One would think it was the Kingdom of Heaven, there is such difficulty in getting in." A dear little impulsive girl, one of the pupils and one of the heroines of the story that I am about to tell, retorted upon this, —

“And it is the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth ;” which I think presents Mrs. Portman’s school in as favorable a light before my readers as many words of mine could do. So now I will return to that window in the great hall. It is the day before Christmas. Those of the pupils who have not gone home on account of the distance, or other reasons, are fluttering about here and there in high holiday humor and expectation. A group of these have wedged themselves into the big window-seat, where they sit chattering like magpies. The centre of the group and the centre of attraction is a bright-eyed brunette. She has the sweetest face, the most lovable face in the world. She is the dear little girl who gave that happy retort about the Kingdom of Heaven. She is saying now as she sits there in the window-seat:

“I’ll tell you what you must do ; as my box has come to-day and yours has n’t, you must come to my room this evening and share my fun and goodies.” There are no disclaimers, no laggards with excuses to beg out of this charming prospect. The whole four girls who have received this invitation of dear Dolly Lincoln’s are only too happy to accept it. As they sit there in the afternoon sun, which is going down in full splendor, they look like five rosebuds. Dolly Lincoln, with her red and brown brightness, is a rich Jacqueminot ;

Margie Gaines, with her golden hair and white skin, a *Perle des Jardins*; Milly Jarvis, with her dark bright hair and dusky skin, a bronzed Jean Ducher; Katy Downes, a little fragrant tea-rose bud all pale amber perfection.; and Florry Wainright, a lovely Noisette of pink and white.

Suddenly all their gay chatter and light laughter goes out in a queer little silence, as down the hall they see approaching a tall overgrown girl whose near-sighted eyes seem to be searching for some one. She comes nearer, quite close to them, indeed, before she appears to recognize them; then she stops abruptly, a deep red color flushes into her face, and she says quickly, —

“I am trying to find Miss Weston. Mrs. Portman said she was at the end of this hall somewhere.”

There was a moment of awkward silence, and then Dolly Lincoln spoke up hurriedly, —

“She must be in number twenty-four, I think.”

As the girl disappeared in number twenty-four, Dolly Lincoln burst out in subdued tones, —

“I think we are horrid little prigs!” A moment more, and then vehemently, “I’m going to invite her to my party to-night!”

“Dolly!” cried the whole four of her companions in a horrified chorus.

“I am — I am, so there!”

"A girl that could do such a thing as she did!"

"Well, we don't *know* anything; it's after all 'circumstantial evidence,' as the newspapers say."

"Well, I should think it was a pretty clear case. Julia Norris goes away and leaves her bag, or reticule, or something, with her, and inside of that bag is the algebra problem for exhibition. When she comes back the problem is missing out of the bag, and Miss Fanny Drayton, who is the only rival in algebra that Julia had, of course comes in first and gets the credit; she would probably have come in second but for that, as she usually did, for poor Julia coming back at the last moment has to make out a new one, which in her hurry can't help being higgledy-piggledy and full of little errors. Circumstantial evidence!" winds up Florry Wainright with a final burst of scorn.

Dolly Lincoln does not reply to this; perhaps she is wisely silent, or perhaps she is overruled, and regrets her declaration of a few moments ago. The four girls think the latter; and the time goes on, the minutes slip by, the tea-hour comes, and the four girls, Milly and Mary and Florry and Katy, have put on their prettiest frills and ribbons and gone in a little giggling body to Dolly Lincoln's door. Dolly meets them with all her merry archness of cordiality. She is a little dramatist, is Dolly, and is fond of putting everything into

that light; so she bends and bows and welcomes them with a gay travesty of reality. She calls Florry Wainright her dear duchess, and hopes she left the duke well; and Milly and Mary are the Princesses of Portmanshire, and little Katy Downes is the Countess of Kisses. It is not long before the whole company are clustered together over the contents of the Christmas box. The box was so big that Dolly has separated the sweets, the candies and cookies and fruits from the rest, and put them into a pretty basket which is passed about from guest to guest.

“*What a pretty basket!*” exclaimed Florry Wainright enthusiastically; and she lifts it up from the table for inspection.

“Yes; is n’t it? It was Julia Norris’s. She gave it to me when she went away.”

From the basket they fell to discussing the contents. Such a tempting array of dainties. Bonbons fresh from Paris,—new devices the like of which none of the girls had ever seen before. The most enchanting of these were sugar robin’s eggs. Inside of each was a little gold ring. There were six of them.

“Just enough to go round and one left over, Dolly!” cried Milly ecstatically, as she cracked the thin sugar shell of the one bestowed upon herself.

Dolly did not reply, but looked a little troubled, Milly thought. Perhaps after all Dolly was regretting her generosity in giving them all such treasures. She managed somehow to convey this to Dolly. Dolly flung herself back upon the bed where she was sitting, with a little burst of laughter.

"What a goose you are, Milly! These bonbons are made to give away. Mamma chose them on purpose for me to give to my friends. They are Christmas favors."

"Tell you what we can do," here cried out little Katy Downes, waking up out of one of her dazy little dreams. "Tell you what you can do," and Katy struck her tiny hand upon her knee in the delight at her new idea; "you — we — can make a club and call it the Robin's Ring Club!"

Dolly jumped off the bed and clutched Katy in a wild embrace.

"Oh, you dear! it's just the thing. Hurrah for the Robin's Ring Club! Hurrah for the Countess of Kisses!" and Dolly showered the latter upon Katy until she screamed for mercy.

Just here in the midst of all this commotion there came a rap upon the door, and Dolly flew back to her throne upon the bed, and then called out rather excitedly, "Come in!"

The door opened and there appeared upon the threshold—Fanny Drayton. At the moment every

one of the girl guests stared in amazement. How dared she intrude herself, they thought. The next moment their amazement took a different form, for Dolly from her seat upon the bed waved her hands invitingly, and said: "Better late than never, Fanny. Come in and sit down. I was afraid that Jane had n't given you my note, you were so long coming."

The four pairs of eyes that had been staring at the girl in the doorway now turned away from her and became intent upon something else. Milly Jarvis leaned against Margie Gaines, and Margie Gaines became absorbed in tasting a piece of candied cocoanut, and Florry Wainright bent her head over the basket, while Katy Downes clasped her hands over a cookie in her lap and looked as if she were going to sleep.

A second or two Fanny paused on the threshold, then, as Dolly kept urging her to come in, she slowly approached the bed and as slowly sank into the vacant chair near by. Dolly's eyes flashed as she saw how all the girls ignored this unfortunate latest comer, and her brave, generous, pitiful spirit rose up to meet the situation. With her gayest, brightest manner she introduced Fanny to the others as the Empress Eugenia, and sparkled off into so many funny jokes that despite their determination to be dignified and cool, first one girl

and then another giggled over their candies and cake.

But not one of them turned a glance upon Fanny, or vouchsafed a word to her. They fell to talking again with each other, but they paid not the slightest attention to the unfortunate Empress Eugenia. Dolly tried to make up for all this by quiet little courtesies and kindnesses. She passed her the basket of sweets again and again, and when Fanny helped herself timidly and sparingly, she heaped a plate for her with the cream of the dainties.

But it was of no use; the near-sighted eyes filled and filled with tears, and the tears ran over and fell upon the sweet things, till the sweet things turned salt and bitter, and the poor empress at last choked and then burst into a sob, and then jumping up flew from the room.

Milly Jarvis stopped leaning against Margie Gaines and sat bolt upright, and Margie Gaines dropped her piece of candied cocoanut as if it had been a hot coal, and Florry Wainright dropped the basket and tipped over the table, — plates, goodies, and all, — and Katy Downes lifted her hands all smeared with her crushed cookie and covered her face, while Dolly Lincoln began to cry as if her heart would break. Between her sobs she gasped, —

“And it’s Christmas, and she’s alone — oh, oh, and no mother — and no father — to send her — thi-things, and we’re — mean — sel-selfish, ha-hateful — gir-girls, and wha-what’ll be-become of *us* some-sometime — spos’n — spos’n we — shou-should do — something bad — that we — were sorry for — for if she has done what — you think — she *is* sorry, and you’re not giving her a chance!” At this last word a general sob and wail sounded in the room; there was a confused tangle of gold locks and dark locks upon the bed, a confused cry of “Dolly, don’t!” and “Dolly, I should n’t have thought!” which was interrupted by a voice from the floor. It was the voice of Florry Wainright. “Girls, girls, look here!” She was sitting near the overturned table amid broken plates and scattered dainties. The empty basket was in her lap; she had just taken a paper from the bottom of it which she was regarding intently. There was something in her voice which made every girl listen; something in her face which the next moment made every girl jump down off the bed and cluster round her on the floor. As they did so, Florry pushed the paper toward them and said: “Girls, this is Julia Norris’s missing problem; it was at the bottom of this basket. What does it mean?”

Dolly jumped to her feet, stood for a moment

with her lips parted, her eyes dilated with some new thought, then she rushed from the room and tore down the hall. The next instant Miss Weston, one of the teachers, was astonished to see Dolly Lincoln, with tear-stained cheeks and swollen eyes, standing before her, and to hear her ask, —

“Miss Weston, was it a bag or a basket that Julia Norris left in charge of Fanny Drayton when she went to see her mother in New York?”

“It was a basket—that pretty Fayal basket. Why do you ask?”

Then Dolly told her story. Miss Weston was only a girl herself of eighteen, and she got quite as excited as Dolly as she listened to this story; and she took Dolly's hand and ran with her down the great hall to where the little group of girls sat on the floor puzzling and pondering over the problem.

“Yes, of course it's the missing problem!” she exclaimed; “and you found it at the bottom of the basket. I asked Julia again and again if she had searched her basket thoroughly when she got it back, and she was so positive, as she always is. I ought to have looked myself. I ought to have remembered that Julia is the most impatient girl, and constantly mixing up and overlooking her things! but she was so sure. Oh, dear! where's Fanny?”

"I'll fetch her;" and Dolly tore down the hall again on her happy errand.

How can I ever picture the scene that ensued? How can I ever make you see Fanny, with her winking, blinking, near-sighted eyes, looking and listening and gradually taking it all in — that the problem had been found where she had put it — that everybody was happy and sorry in a breath, and asking her pardon and trying to kiss her and make much of her. The crown of everything came when suddenly Dolly pounced upon the sixth robin's egg, the one "left over," and made Fanny the sixth member of the Robin's Ring Club. And such a good time as they had afterwards. They sat up until half-past nine o'clock, and Miss Weston sat with them, and laughed and told stories as gayly as any of them; and at the end, when one after another of the girls said they never, never had had such a good time in their lives before, Miss Weston declared that she certainly never had a *better* time. Whereupon Dolly pulled off her Robin's Egg ring and asked Miss Weston if she felt too big and too old to belong to their club; and Miss Weston said she should be only too delighted to belong, but she did n't want to rob Dolly of her ring; but Dolly was n't going to stop for such a trifle as that, she was sure she could get another one. So "on her very littlest finger" Miss Weston put Dolly's

Robin's Egg ring; and there she wears it to this day, as sign and seal of her membership of the Robin's Ring Club, and of that delightful evening when they were all so sorry and happy together at Dolly's Christmas Kettledrum.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

“GLEN, I want to ask you a question, — a straight-out question, as we used to say at Miss Teller’s school when our curiosity was roused.”

Glen laughed. “You may ask a dozen, Kitty.”

“And you will answer them or not as you think fit?”

“You would never ask a question I should not want to answer, Kittykins.”

“Oh dear, now you do put me on the very top shelf of my honor and delicacy, and all that sort of thing; but I’m going to ask the question all the same, though it’s downright curiosity that prompts it, nothing else. The question is just this: Why do you have that old French motto, *Noblesse Oblige*, appear in so many places in your house? I picked it out the other day in that pretty banner screen design you had painted, and I saw it painted in that scroll that hangs at the foot of your bed, and here it is now in this dreadful old English text on this lovely mirror frame, and engraved inside that locket you wear.”

Glen — her name is Glendower, an old family name which her father bestowed upon her for the very good reason that he was bound to have a child of his wear the time-honored appellation, and as he had no son to wear it, he could not see why it was not the prettiest name in the world for a girl, and for that matter neither can I — Glen, as her friend Kitty came to the conclusion of her question, looked up from her crewel work and laughed again.

“Oh, Kitty,” she cried, “you are such a queer little conundrum of a girl! I thought when you began you were going to ask about some very serious matter indeed; and lo and behold it’s only about our old motto. See here!” and going to the bookcase she took down a volume, turned the leaves, and presently handed it open to Kitty.

And Kitty read of a certain gallant French officer in the time of Henry the Fourth, of France, who, when honors and glories were showered upon him after a hard-fought battle where he had borne himself most gallantly, modestly disclaimed the sole honor and credit, and pointed out a brother officer as more deserving than himself. Those were rough and roistering times when men did not give way to another easily, and he was questioned with much amazement for reason of his conduct.

He promptly replied: "I come of an honorable race who have never profited by unlawful gains."

When this answer was noised about, one of the peers of the realm was so struck with admiration that he exclaimed, "He should be knighted for his nobility of conduct, and his motto should be *Noblesse Oblige*."

When a peer of the realm in those days spoke like this, speech was soon followed by action, and it was not long before the gallant officer bore the title of baron, and upon his shield he had written the motto, *Noblesse Oblige*.

When Kitty lifted her eyes from the page, Glen spoke up, answering the unspoken question of her eyes, —

"That officer was an ancestor of ours, my dear, and when I first read this story about him, four years ago, though I was only thirteen years old, I was determined to keep that motto of his in sight to save me from doing mean things."

"As if you *could* do mean things, Glen!"

"As if I *could n't*! Oh, you don't know me, Kittykins; I've got some horrid faults."

"As which?" asked Kitty, smiling up incredulously into beautiful Glen's face, — beautiful Glen, whom she had never seen ruffled or moved out of that sweet serenity of hers.

"Ah, but I am not going to tell; you must

find out for yourself," blushing and laughing, Glen answered : and Kitty laughed too.

She did n't believe much in Glen's faults, her "horrid faults," as that young lady had called them, and Glen herself was certainly not very much impressed by them as she talked about them there that bright day in her own cosey little sitting-room.

Going home after lunch, Kitty, as she always did when she had spent any time with Glen, pondered admiringly and lovingly over her many attractions and virtues, and on this occasion turned over again in her mind the question of the faults.

"Of course," said sensible little Kitty to herself, "Glen has faults, because everybody has faults; but I'm sure there is nothing mean or horrid about them. She must be like that person that Goldsmith tells about, whose 'failings leaned to virtue's side.'"

While Kitty thus lovingly defends her idol in her thoughts, the idol herself, remembering Kitty's admiring looks and words and what had called them forth, is thinking of the same subject, — these very faults. "I know what my faults are," she said half aloud as she thought. "I know I am fond of admiration, and pretty clothes, and of having my own way. I know I am inclined to be indolent, and to put off everything I can that is

not an absolute pleasure. But of one thing I am sure: I am not selfish or stingy."

She said this last sentence with very decided emphasis. Perhaps it was her occupation that pointed the emphasis; she was folding up several partly worn dresses of her own, and was presently going to make them into a package to send away to her cousin, Josephine Emory, who was not favored like herself with a rich father. Every spring and autumn Glen made up these packages to send to Josephine, and whenever she did it her heart always glowed with a warm sense of kindliness, not only toward Josephine, but toward people generally.

"Joe will get this to-morrow afternoon if I express it to-day," she thought, "and how pleased she will be, and how pretty she will look when she has made the things over with those deft little fingers of hers!"

What would Kitty Bell have thought, what would she have said, and what would Glen have thought and said, if they had been invisibly present at the Emorys' the next afternoon at five o'clock? At that very hour precisely, Josephine was looking over the package of dresses. She held up to the light a long polonaise of gray cashmere, with a very elaborate trimming of satin of the same shade. The skirt for this was quite as elaborately trimmed,

and heavy with stiff facings and quillings. Josephine's face did not look as pleased as Glen had fancied it. "Mother," she said at length, "do you know I think it would be cheaper for me to buy my own dresses than to get these made over to fit me. Glen, you see, is a great deal larger than I."

"But then you could never afford to get such material, my dear."

"I know that; but this material is partly worn, and I must get new satin, if I can match it, to make fresh bows, and I must pay Mrs. Wheeler quite as much as I would to make a new dress to make it over thoroughly, or else I must wear the skirt as it is with all that heavy lining and facing, and I can't—I'm not strong like Glen; I can't carry all that weight."

"Of course not; but how about the others, Josephine?" asked her mother. Then Josephine held up and inspected two more elaborately trimmed gowns,—one of mingled surah satin and foulard of peacock blue and fawn color, another in two shades of green. All of them were profusely trimmed, and heavy with the weight of crinoline, and other linings and facings. Both too long in the skirt and large in the waist and sleeves for delicate little Josephine, there would be a great deal of ripping and fitting and sewing before they

would be wearable for her; and all this would cost money.

"I suppose Glen thinks we do the altering ourselves," presently said Mrs. Emory.

"Yes, I suppose she does; she has seen me do little things that were needed to my dresses when I have been visiting her. But how little people stop to think of other people's ways and means — I mean how little rich people do. Glen knows that I teach all day, and that you work all day about the house," — as Josephine said this, she looked up at her mother, that dear, dear tired mother, who would never say she was tired; and looking into the dear face, a spasm of emotion which came up from her girl's heart, out of all the bitter sweet memories of their hard pinching times, quivered upon her lips. Then all at once a rush of tears came, and then a rush of words in such truth as people give utterance to when the hurt heart speaks:

"Oh, mother, mother, I know Glen means well — that she means to give me pleasure, and it gives *her* pleasure too; but do you think that if *I* were in her place I should be so ignorant of those I wanted to help? If I were Glen I should see that my gifts made it easier for those who received them, not harder."

"My dear, I'm sure it's very kind of her to *think* to send you these things."

“Mother, I suppose all this sounds very ungrateful, but why should we be grateful for what we don’t ask for and don’t want, just because some one chooses to burden us out of their superabundance? Glen does n’t want these things. She is very glad to give them to me; and she says to her mother,—I have heard her,—‘Mamma, I shall give Joe my foulard and the gray cashmere—they have both strained at the seams—and I shall get me a white pongee and a new black silk to take their place.’ Mother, you know and I know what we should do if I were in Glen’s place, with eight hundred dollars a year to spend as she pleases. If I were in Glen’s place and Glen in mine, I should not send her cast-off finery; I should give her now and then a new gown, or the money to buy one, just such as she wanted.”

“Your uncle William is very kind on Christmas, you must remember, Joe dear.”

“Yes, mother, but I’m talking of Glen; and the sting of it is that Glen is so pleased with herself for her goodness to ‘poor Joe,’ mother.”

“My dear, we have learned many things by being poor that we should never have known if we had been rich, and perhaps if we had not learned so much of the wants and ways of poor people, if we had been rich always, we might have been no wiser in our actions than your cousin Glen.”

"Perhaps so," answered Josephine, sighing; but even as she made this admission she thought to herself it was scarcely possible, so vivid was her realization of the wants and ways of those about her.

Kitty Bell was in a great state of delight, for she had got her heart's desire in having her beautiful Glen for a guest at Bellefontaine, the summer residence of the Bell family. Glen was a charming guest; sweet tempered, and easily pleased, as all sweet-tempered people are generally, she fitted in to all the little plans and pursuits with a ready alacrity that made her delightful. As she had said of herself, she was fond of having her own way; but in a bright lively house like the Bells', it was not difficult to make her ways like theirs. There were also plenty of lively neighbors, and picnics, lawn tennis parties, boating parties, and all the many summer excursions occupied the days from morning until night. Glen had noticed, however, that on Saturday of every week Kitty always excused herself from any of the pleasure plans, and spent the time in her mother's sewing-room. In the beginning of the visit she had said to Glen, "Saturdays I always spend with mamma in sewing, and you can join me in the sewing-room or not, just as you choose." But Glen did not like

to sew, so she never accepted this invitation more fully than to put her head in at the doorway now and then, or look in at the low window to say a word to Kitty. "Dear, good little thing!" she used to think of Kitty rather patronizingly, "she will never do any great thing, never take a high place, or see beyond her daily routine of the usual cut-and-dried duties and charities, but I like her immensely, and there must be somebody to do the small things of life." While she said all this to herself, beautiful Glen was thinking of a certain voluntary performance of hers once a fortnight when she was in town, at the rooms of the Christian Association for poor boys. Glen had a lovely voice, and when the young president of the association asked her if she would sing one evening for his boys, Glen consented with no idea of repeating it; but she found it so pleasant, with not only the appreciation of the boys, but with the praise of the president and two or three of his friends who were present, that she volunteered to sing again; and so the singing had kept on from fortnight to fortnight, until it had got to be a regular thing, and Glen found as the winter went on that her audience also increased, and that she was quite a heroine, — a heroine who was greatly commended for her services to these poor children. Thinking of all this, and of Kitty and her small things, Glen one

Saturday morning sauntered into the sewing-room, and found her friend busily at work upon a little gown, and with a pile of other little gowns before her.

“Charity work, eh, Kitty dear! My child, why don’t you let somebody else do this who would be glad of the employment? That is my way, and it makes a double charity service, you see.”

“But it is n’t charity work, Glen. I’ll tell you. Mamma has a friend who has had great reverses. We should be very glad to give her money, but she very naturally would n’t like that, and so mamma and I hit upon this way to help her. She has several children, and I persuaded her to let me employ some of my leisure time in making garments for them. Mamma told her that she should be very glad to have me learn how to cut and fit and make clothing for my own sake, which is quite true, and I am very, very glad to help dear auntie May, as I have always called her.”

“But what is this, — what are you doing with this pretty black silk of yours?” queried Glen.

“Oh! that I am fitting over a little and retrimming for Jessie, the eldest daughter, who is near my age, but slighter and smaller.”

“But why don’t you send it as it is, and let her do it herself?”

“Because Jessie is nursery governess to the

younger children, and besides, assists her mother in the chamber work, so she has n't any time, unless she takes the time that she ought to rest to do it; and if she hired it done, it would hardly be the real help I want it to be, would it?"

Glen could not answer. Her heart gave a great throb and a mist seemed to obscure her vision for a moment, for all at once Kitty's ways that she had thought such small ways shone before her in contrast to her own. All at once she saw how she had deceived herself in her idea of her own superiority. While she had been priding herself upon her good works, her generosity, none of which brought her trouble or pains, but only gratified her ambition and contributed to her pleasure, here was this little Kitty who loved the sunshine and the flowers, whom they had always called at school, "lazy little Kitty," voluntarily giving up her time, voluntarily giving up the sunshine and the flowers, and the gay doings, whatever they might be, that came on Saturday, that she might do this unselfish and noble thing; while she, Glendower Hastings, who had set before herself that old motto of *Noblesse Oblige*, to keep from doing the mean or the selfish act, she — As Glen reached this climax in all the sudden rush of thought, her impetuous nature burst forth in a flood of tears.

"Oh, Glen, Glen!" — and Kitty sprang from her seat, — "what is it?"

Glen answered by removing the chain that held the locket whereon she had had engraved her motto. "Kitty, I don't deserve to wear it," she said.

"Glen, Glen, what *do* you mean?"

"I mean that I have been miserably selfish, while I was priding myself upon my superiority; that I have been setting myself up, while you, — oh, you dear, blessed Kitty! — *you* have shown me the right, unselfish thing I *should* have done!"

Glen was nobler than she gave herself credit for at the time, for then and there, moved out of her self-absorption, with flushing cheeks, she did sore penance by frankly confessing herself to Kitty — by telling her of all her selfish thoughtlessness, by saying at the end — "And Josephine is my own cousin, Kitty, whom I thought I was doing so much for in sending her my old dresses that I didn't want, for her to take the time and the money that she could n't spare, to fit them over herself."

Kitty, distressed and sympathetic, and deprecating her own simplicity of action as anything noble, tried in vain to console her friend by praise of her present frankness, and delicate excuses for her former thoughtlessness. There was no half-way to Glen. Once the truth was placed before her

she never attempted to shirk it; and it showed what a really fine basis there was to her character, that, fond as she was of praise and adulation, she did not now fall back upon Kitty's praises and excuses. She listened to them, however, but with a new look in her eyes — an admiring look of appreciation — for Kitty, whose ways she had ignorantly called "small ways;" and presently with this new look in her eyes, and with her usual quiet composure, she bent over and clasped the chain and locket she had worn about Kitty's neck.

"It is you who should wear this and not I, Kitty dear," she said gently. Kitty tried to protest, but Glen made it a matter of personal favor.

"I want you to wear the motto to please me, Kitty; not as I have worn it, for a reminder, but as our knight of the old days wore it, as a seal and sign of his own nobility."

Kitty could not understand, she never did understand why Glen should make so much of so small a matter. Like all simple, unimaginative persons, she could not rate herself, and simply thought she had done a very natural and commonplace thing, and that Glen who was so clever, and had so much to do that was splendid and brilliant for people, had only forgotten to do the commonplace thing for a while. Perhaps if this dear, modest, good little girl could have stepped into the Emorys'

small sitting-room some time after this, and heard Josephine exclaim at the check she found in a letter from her cousin Glen, and have heard her read aloud to her mother the letter itself, and have heard Josephine's tearful but altogether happy comment, she would have understood better the value of her own unselfish example.

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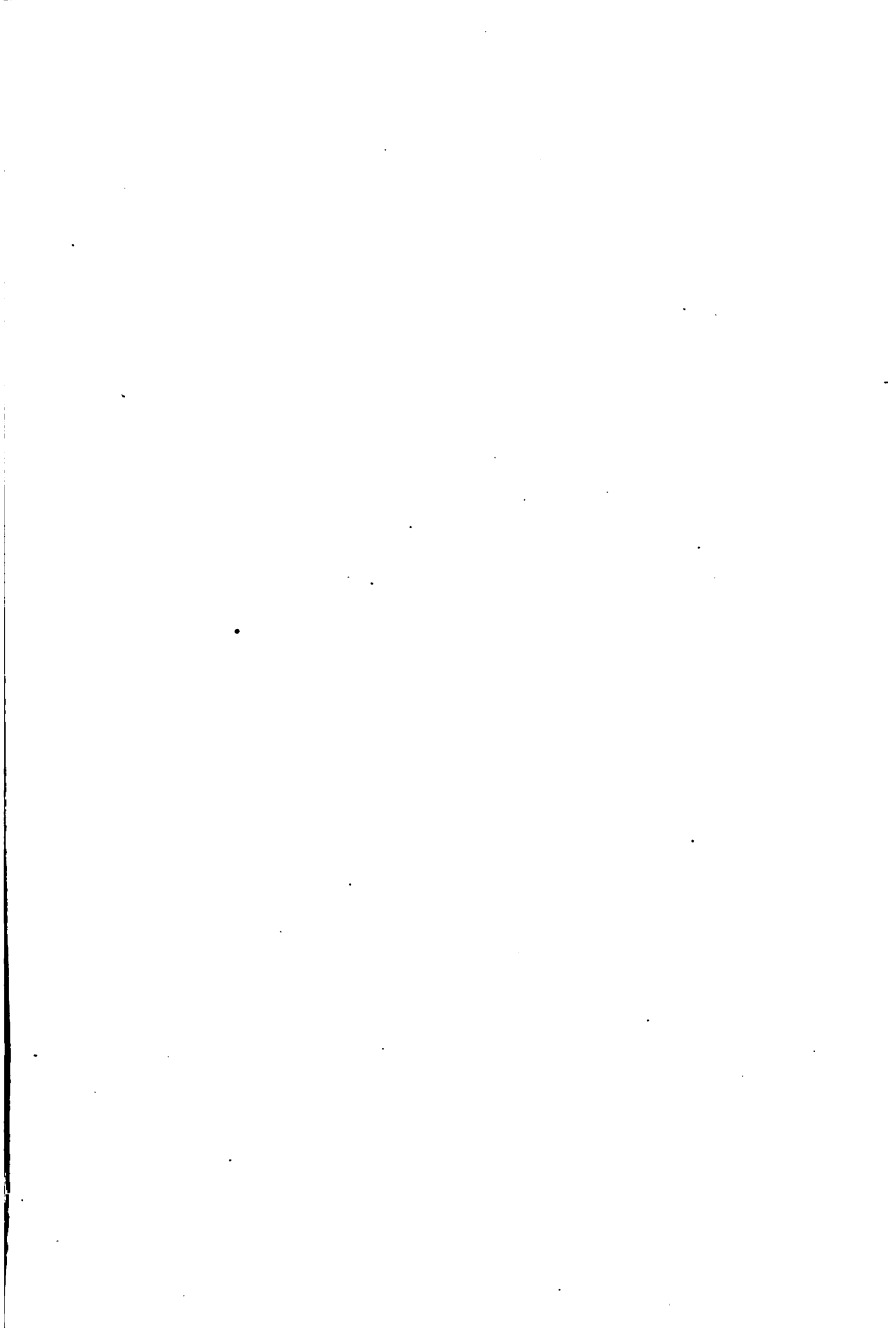
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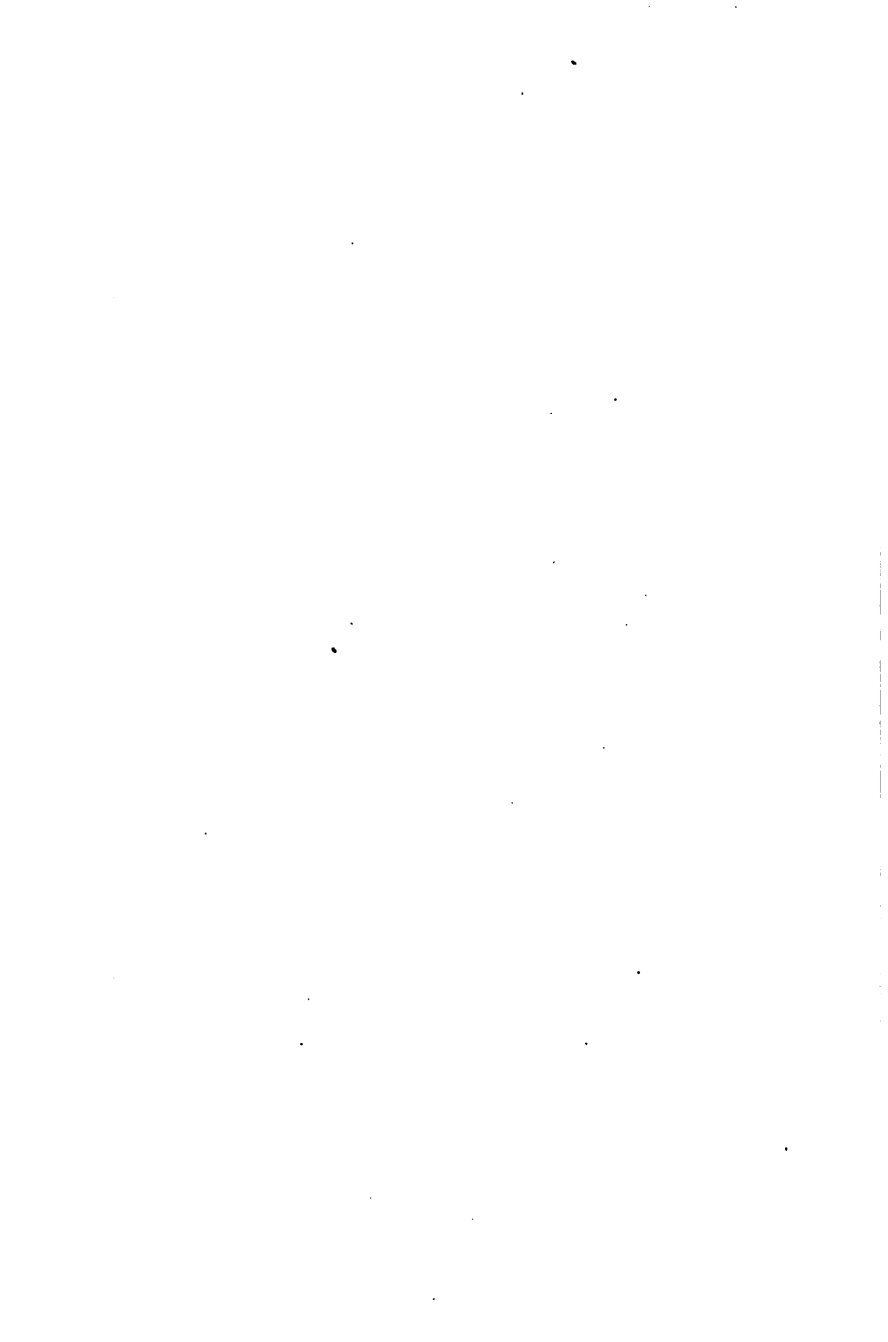
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